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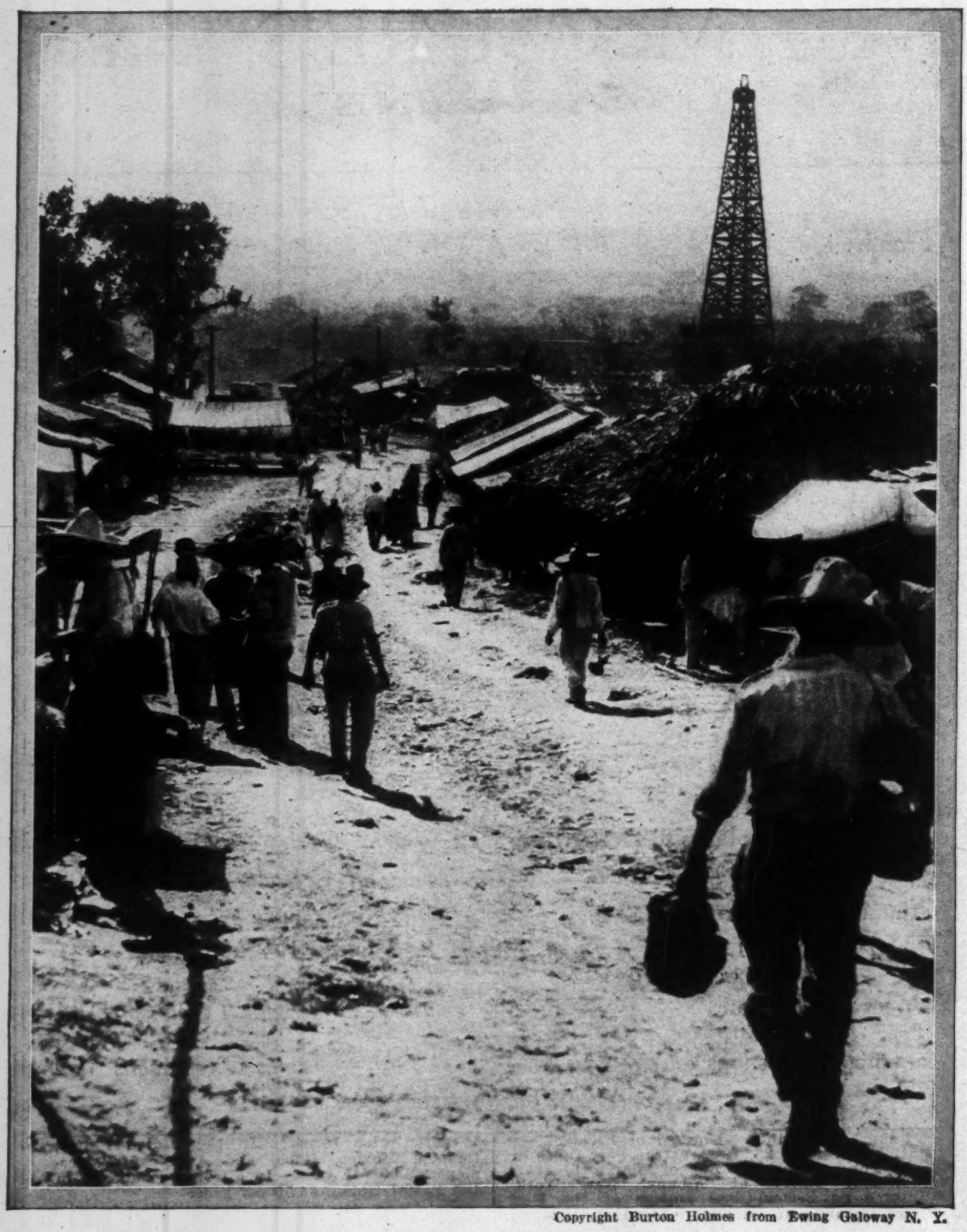

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Oil is the rich and romantic adventure of to-day, just as gold was in 1849.

A street scene in the oil town of Zacamixtle, Mexico.

McCLURE'S MAGAZINE

VOL. LVII AUGUST, 1924 No. 4

BURNING WATER

All machinery is geared to oil and without oil modern industry would cease to function.

By SAMUEL CROWTHER

A FEW years ago when England and all the world were rolling about in the intoxication of post-war bureaucratic government, a British public official said:

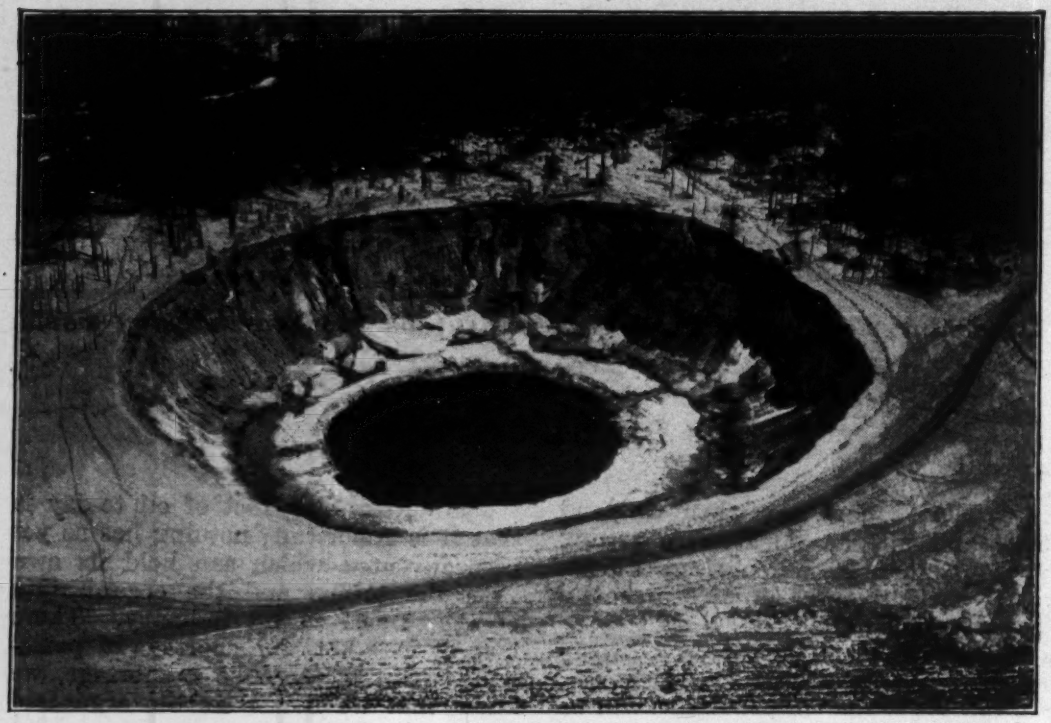
"We shall not have to worry about our war debt to the United States. In a few years the United States will be importing oil from us in such quantities that the debt will be a mere trifle. American automobiles will pay off the debt!"

That statement went round the world. It impressed almost every one except a small group—the American oil men. They expressed themselves in one word of four letters—"Bunk." The diplomats at Genoa played hide and seek for oil; they said that oil power was world power and that the country without oil would be worse off in the next war than the country without iron.

The years have gone by. The diplomats are still talking oil and world power, but they are not producing oil. The British company, which with government funds was going to do everybody's oil business, has cost the taxpayers so much money that Prime Minister Baldwin would have wound it up had he stayed in office long enough. British oil is still underground in Mesopotamia. The oil business is still being done by companies founded with American money and managed by American men; they are doing eighty per cent of the present business and they could do more if they thought the exertion for the extra business worth the trouble.

The outstanding fact of oil to-day is that it is American; nothing has as yet been invented which can hold its own with the brains and the organization of the American oil industry. There may or may not be a shortage of petroleum. But if there be a shortage, we know that we now have the organized human effort to get the oil. The test of whether or not there is any oil in a territory is whether or not there is an American in the landscape—an American wearing a black felt hat and a vest, chewing tobacco and laconically drilling a well.

We think of petroleum as fuel—as "coal oil" to be burned—and there is rather a distinct impression that the beginning and the end of the oil business is dipping up the oil as it flows from the ground and taking it off to the consumer. It is supposed to be a good deal like the coal business, except that while coal has to be laboriously cut out of the earth by the hardest of labor, oil just flows out into a container while the well owner sits by watching the flow and wondering what he is going to do with all the money he is making. Out of some wells flows kerosene, out of others gasoline, and about all there is to the oil industry is bringing the kerosene or gasoline to market, selling it for all the traffic will bear and pocketing the money. That seems to be the public conception of the petroleum industry. It follows that the big oil fortunes have been made by rich men getting in between the producer and the consumer and by sheer force widening the price



© Major Hamilton Maxwell from Underwood & Underwood

The greatest gas crater ever known is in Smackover, Arkansas. It wasted 40,000 cubic feet of gas every 24 hours for four months.

spread. Curiously few people realize that, although crude petroleum as it comes from the ground will burn and may sometimes be used as a fuel just as it is, the petroleum industry takes this crude oil purely as raw material—as something no nearer the point of consumption than is iron ore—and then proceeds to make from this raw material a vast number of products, many of which the consumer does not know comes from petroleum.

These are not just by-products. The term "by-products" is an unfortunate one, anyway, for it connotes the utilization of something left over when the main purpose has been accomplished, whereas modern industry directed by chemical engineering looks at a raw material as something to be split up into as many useful products as is profitably possible. The notion of by-products comes down to us from the days when we knew practically nothing about what we were doing and thought that each raw material would produce one, and only one, commodity. For instance, lumbering was an affair of producing lumber, and whatever parts of a tree would not cut into the marketable timber sizes were just so much waste and nuisance. Now we know that wood sold as paper has an infinitely higher value than wood sold as wood. We are even beginning to learn that coal is not a raw material to be burned, but rather a raw material with which to start a number of processes, and that in the course of these processes appear a number of products of varying values, and that the least valuable of these can be burned to give more heat units than the original coal. We are learning a great deal about how raw material may be best used, and we are actually applying more than a little of this knowledge.

But in no raw material has the search for knowledge gone so far as in petroleum, and in no industry have the results of scientific research been so widely applied. It has gone so far, indeed, that the big refining and distributing organizations could to-day scarcely turn a profit, selling only gasoline, kerosene and fuel oil. In the early days of the industry, before organization began, refineries were simple affairs that could be set up anywhere. For the single

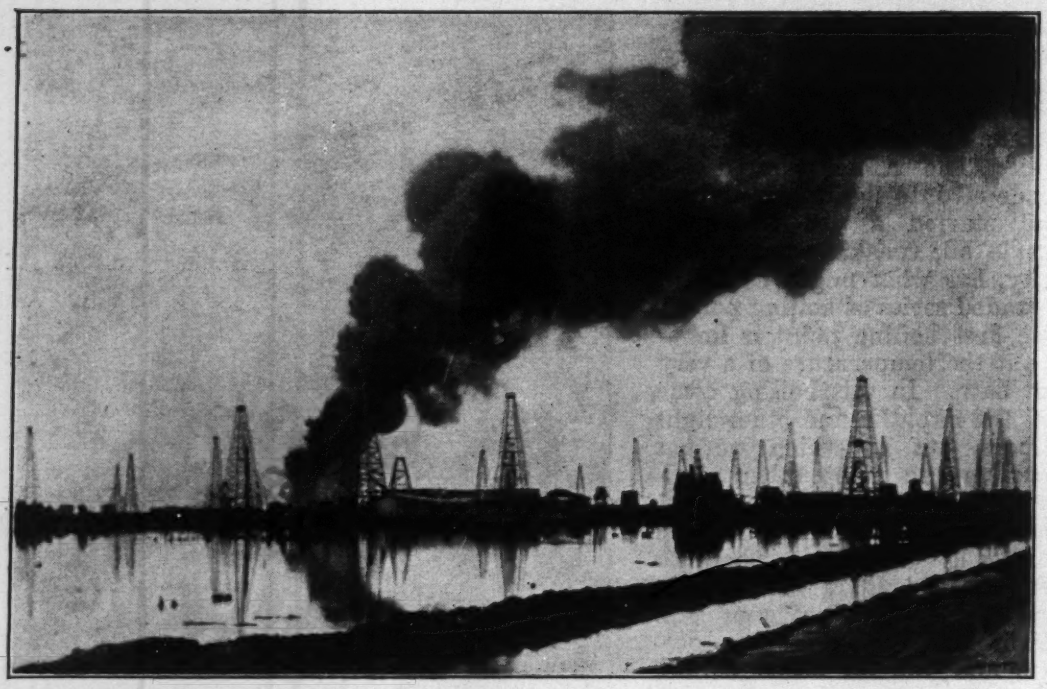
saleable produot was kerosene for lighting, and later for cooking and heating. A refinery consisted of a big iron pot cased with brick, with a copper worm to take off and condense the vapors. The refiner poured the crude oil into the iron container and started a fire under it. Crude oil, speaking unscientifically, has what might be called a graded series of boiling points. The first boiling point is low—about the temperature of a very hot bath. In this boiling come out the naphtha and other light vapors, out of which we get gasoline and many other products. After a time the liquid ceases to boil—although it is just as hot as before. Then the temperature is raised a little and the liquid begins to boil again, and the kerosene vaporizes and the oil keeps boiling until all of the kerosene is off.

The old refiners used only the middle of the run—the kerosene. The benzines and naphthas, which came off first, and the heavy oil remaining after the kerosene had boiled away were the nuisances of the refining business. They had to be disposed of somehow and the common practice was to dump them into some nearby stream at night, thereby spoiling the water and killing the fish. Many of the states passed stringent laws against the turning of refinery wastes into water courses and most refiners had their own pet extra-legal methods of evading these laws.

To-day the petroleum profits are in the wastes of yesterday. The motor fuels and many other products come in the early part of the run before the kerosene; out of what used to be the residue come the lubricating oils, the paraffin, and hundreds of other valuable products. In the old days refinery owners complimented the managers who showed ingenuity in getting rid of their waste products and cheerfully paid their fines when

Underwood and Underwood.

A 65,000 barrel gusher in Venezuela reflected in a pool of its own oil.



Underwood and Underwood.

View across an oil tank at Orange, Texas, of a huge and costly oil fire.

they violated the law. To-day a manager who had any waste products to dispose of surreptitiously would be fired! Science has so developed petroleum that getting kerosene is only an incident.

It has been discovered that crude petroleum is among the most versatile of the raw materials with which Nature has provided us. As one of the leading chemists of the country said to me:

"Petroleum is far too valuable to be used as a raw fuel. It contains the four classes of hydro-carbons—the paraffins, the olefines, the naphthenes, and the aromatics—which are the foundation of all organic chemistry. Chemistry can use petroleum in a thousand valuable ways. It is an economic crime just to split it up into fractions suitable for burning under various sets of conditions."

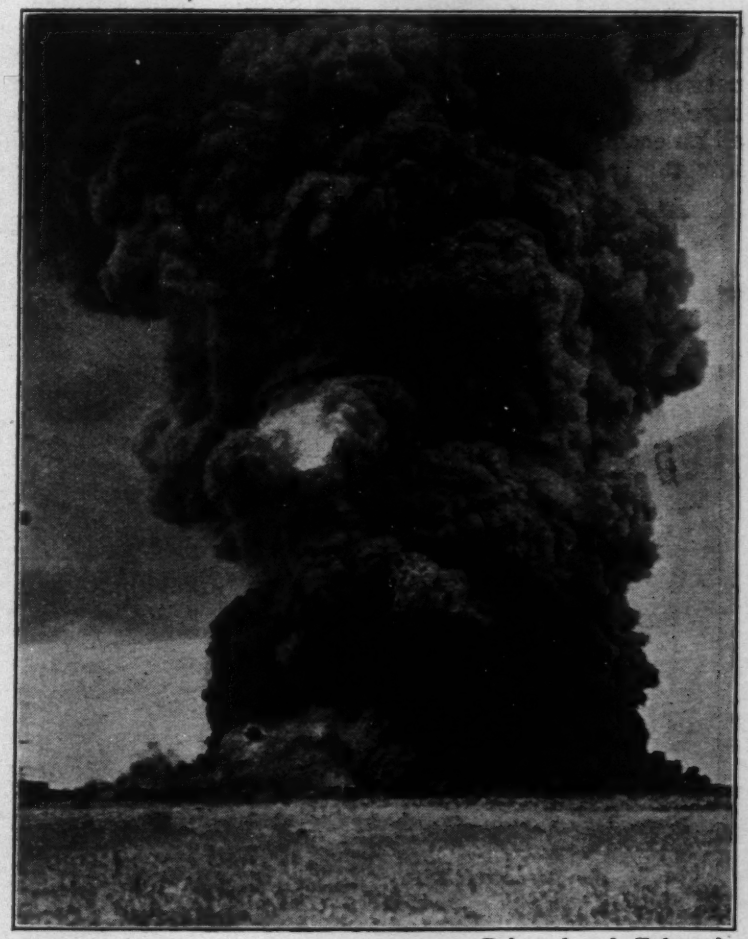
The prevailing impression, that the principal thing in the oil industry is to collect the oil as it comes from the earth and then to sell the contents of the container to consumers at the highest price they can be made to pay for it, is a fairly true description of the old industry, because the refining of the crude petroleum was so elementary as hardly to be worth mentioning. The well digger took the place of the whaler, and that is about all he did. In coal oil he provided a cheaper and better illuminant than the whaler could match with sperm oil. He put whaling and all its romance out of business and he brought into being a new business and a new kind of romance. But had petroleum remained only as a source of kerosene for light and heat, we should to-day have a waning industry. For, although filling the kerosene lamps and stoves of the world is a considerable undertaking, it is not one with a future. The Welsbach mantle and the electric bulb are much more desirable than the kerosene burner.

In 1906 the assets of the petroleum industry did not exceed three-quarters of a billion dollars and its principal business was supplying the world with thirty-three million barrels of kerosene and a few odds and ends of products, principally lubricating oils, which were sold cheaply and used because they were cheap. And, as Mr. A. C. Bedford has pointed out, the lamps using that kerosene were worth only a few million dol-

lars. To-day, after nearly twenty years, the industry produces only about a quarter more kerosene than it did before, but now the industry has in it assets worth easily ten billion dollars. It supplies upwards of two hundred million barrels of gasoline a year, which is consumed in motor vehicles worth around thirteen or fourteen billion dollars—behind which is the whole automotive industry, now ranked, according to the value of its products, as the third industry of the country and doing an annual business, taking its entire production range, of three billion dollars. Henry Ford has calculated that his section of the industry alone supports two million people.

Instead of an industry just filling lamps we now have an industry (1) which supplies the primary force for land and water transportation through the internal combustion engine; (2) which through its fuel oil is rapidly becoming the principal source of power at sea and especially of war power at sea; (3) which through another variety of oil supplies the principal constituent of illuminating gas; (4) which through its lubricating oil permits the functioning of machinery at speeds which were formerly considered impossible; (5) which through many hundreds of derived products reaches into almost every phase of industry and life. Starting as a mere convenience, petroleum has become an essential of modern civilization. To-day we could more easily live w i t h o u t w h e a t than without petroleum. It is complementary to iron and steel. As compared with cotton, it is a choice whether one w o u l d rather lose the right foot or the left foot.

This tremendous development in the use of petroleum—a use so great as to lead many to call this the oil age—has not been accidental. It is purely a result of organized effort. Before the Standard Oil Company came into the field and began to apply scientific business principles to the refining and distribution of oil, the refiners, to repeat, took the kerosene out of the petroleum and threw all that remained away. They had no resources to see what might be made out of the wastes of refining. But even more important, they had no resources to create markets for new products. A good idea is nothing of itself. Behind a good idea must be the capital and the brains to make the good idea useful. The chemists knew that there was much more in petroleum than kerosene, but none of the small, independent refineries had the



Underwood and Underwood.

Nearer view of the same fire—thousands of gallons of petroleum going up in smoke.

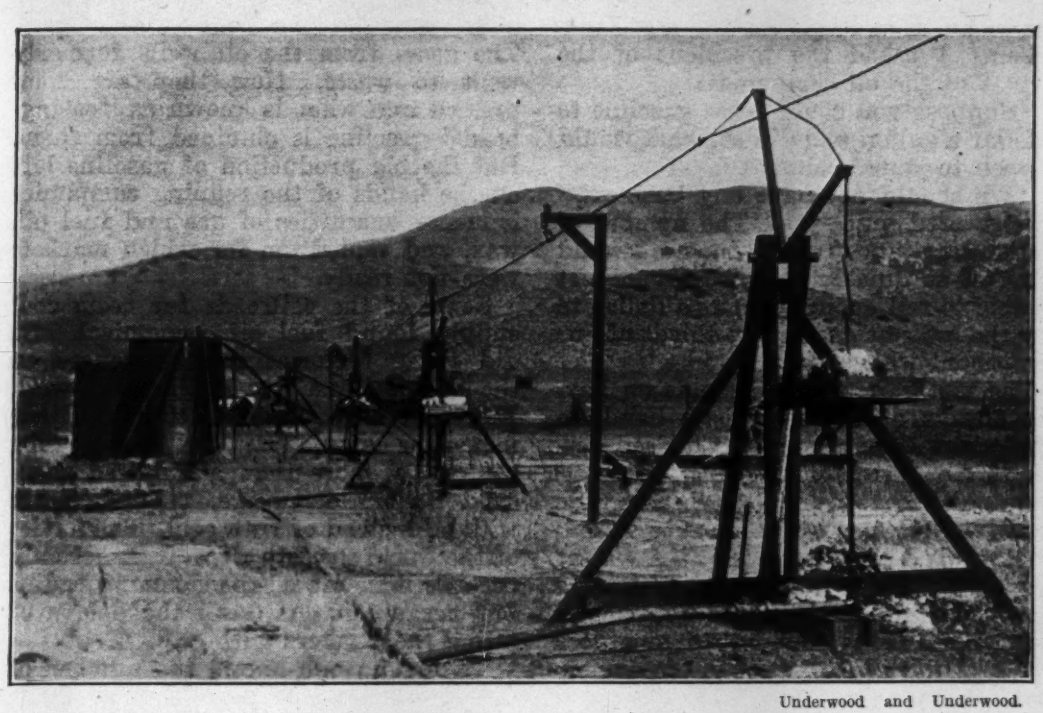
financial strength or the commercial acumen to do more than supply the demands of already existing markets. The ordinary small business lives from day to day and it rarely tries anything new. It has no money to try out new things. The exceptional man, beginning with a small business, invariably deprives himself in order to feed the business and he makes it grow by trying new things in a small way until eventually he can try new things in a large way.

No outstanding industrial success has even been due to corralling trade already in existence. A great corporation may begin by trying to monopolize everything in sight, but it grows and becomes a success only as it develops new products and new markets. That is the reason why government monopolies are never truly successful. They merely crystallize the trade of the moment and then they start to fossilize. The Standard Oil Company, as slowly brought together by Mr. Rockefeller, was a combination of competitive units each struggling for existence. He produced first of all an economical system for bringing oil into the refineries and then an economical system for distributing kerosene to the consumers. The company under careful management soon gained the financial leisure to investigate both its producing and its refining wastes. It had already had the urge to cut down wastes. While its main product continued to be kerosene, it was bringing out other products and marketing them. It had not only the means to make technical investigations, but also to carry through the critical period between the introduction of a new product and its acceptance by the public.

The early experiments in this country with the gasoline engine would have been only laboratory experiments had not a supply of gasoline been available. But the organization which Mr. Rockefeller had built was always ready with gasoline. Although the original Standard Oil Company was dissolved by the United States in the midst of the automobile boom, the new companies formed out of the parts of the old were so thoroughly trained in the old methods that they were able to meet the automobile boom—to do the day's work. The independent companies are all modeled after

Underwood and Underwood.

Thousands of barrels of oil are pumped daily from beneath the bed of the ocean at Santa Barbara, California.



Underwood and Underwood.

Petroleum is so near the surface in the world's shallowest oil field at Oxnard, California, that a pick and shovel are enough to open a well.

the Standard Oil pattern in so far as production and distribution are concerned; in fact in the whole world today there is only one way of distributing petroleum products, and that is the Standard Oil way.

In considering the automotive industry we think in terms of cars dropping from factories as from an automatic machine. We rarely think that each of those cars means an additional consumer of gasoline—about 335 gallons a year for a passenger car and 1,000 gallons for a truck, on a rough average. Not only must the oil companies watch the production and sales of automobiles, but they must know the districts they are going into and be ready so that no motorist can ever complain of difficulty in buying good gas in the most convenient way. The average expenditure for gasoline is only about ten per cent of the cost of the maintenance of the car—including all factors—yet it is on the free supply of gasoline that the industry depends.

The United States was by no means the first country to go in for motoring—when a motor car was a rich man's toy Europe had many more of them than we had. But now this country has ninety per cent of the world's motor cars. This is not because cars can be made so much cheaper here; our cheap cars are possible because of the demand, and the demand has arisen because our government has not put direct taxes on gasoline and has not attempted to control its price or sale. All of the foreign governments, on the contrary, have mixed legislation into oil and have by taxation and regulation so raised its price that gasoline sells anywhere from fifty cents to around a dollar a gallon and a man of moderate means cannot operate a car for pleasure, much less use one for economical transport in his business. Our oil companies have been able to run a continuous gauntlet of subversive legislation and still sell gasoline at so low a price as to make the automobile an integral part of our national life. They have been able to live and grow because they have initiative, brains, and organization enough to surmount obstacles.

The whole automotive trade and the price of gasoline are intimately connected. About a year ago a Senator who uses Standard Oil as a bogie man to command the attention of his constituents when they grow restive, stated that he had just discovered a great oil combination which might force the

American price of gasoline to a dollar a gallon. I asked the president of the largest of the oil companies:

"Suppose you could force gasoline to a dollar a gallon and did so, what would happen to your business?"

"We should not have any business," he answered quickly. "The number of motor cars and trucks in use would drop off so quickly that we should not be able to sell enough gas at a dollar to pay the interest on the two-thirds of our investment which would be idle."

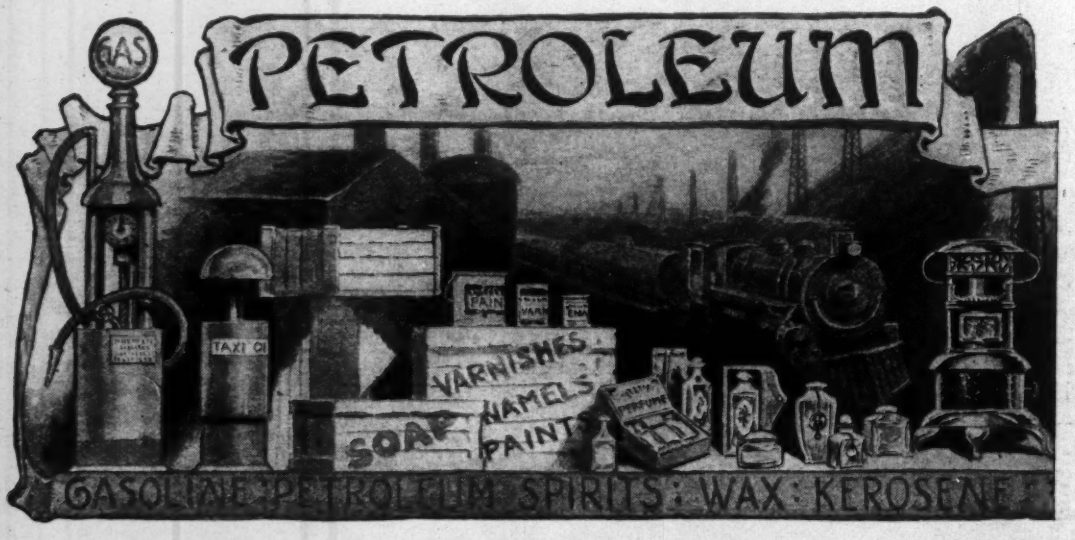
The motor industry depends on having always at the motorist's hand an ample supply of moderately priced gasoline; the petroleum industry depends upon being able to produce that supply. The United States uses about five 42 gallon barrels a head per year; the rest of the world uses less than one-fifth of a barrel per head. This is the best evidence that we are being well served; one does not buy liberally of what is too expensive.

The tremendous expansion of the petroleum industry to meet the demands for gasoline brought with it a vast array of other problems. These motor cars needed lubricants in quantities which had never even been thought of. The machinery used to make them needed lubricants, and it was quickly discovered by the engineers that all of these lubricants had to be highly specialized. The staples obtained by refining petroleum are gasoline, kerosene, gas oil, fuel oil, lubricating oil, wax, and asphaltum. New refining processes had to be evolved to get more gasoline than the old methods would give. The gases from the oil wells formerly went to waste. Now they are compressed and what is known as "casing-head" gasoline is obtained from them. But the big production of gasoline left on the hands of the refining companies immense quantities of gas and fuel oil, wax, and asphaltum for which markets were not ready.

Some of the railroads far from coal supply found fuel oil economical. So did many factories and residences on the Pacific Coast and in the Southwest. Experiments at sea showed that a big passenger ship, like the Mauretania, could save more than a hundred thousand dollars a voyage, making steam with oil instead of with coal. The navies of the world took up oil as fuel, not only because it increased the steaming radius but because it cut down the delays of filling the bunkers with coal.

To-day no one knows the number of directions in which petroleum products are being used. Any list which I might give to-day would be incomplete to-morrow, because by then the hundreds of chemists who are working on these problems would probably have added new items. Even a partial summary is is impressive.

Crude petroleum is not a uniform product. Every field produces its own particular kind of petroleum and often the same field will produce several varities. But, generally speaking, the petroleums divide into four rough classes, according to whether the base is paraffin, napthenic, asphaltic or



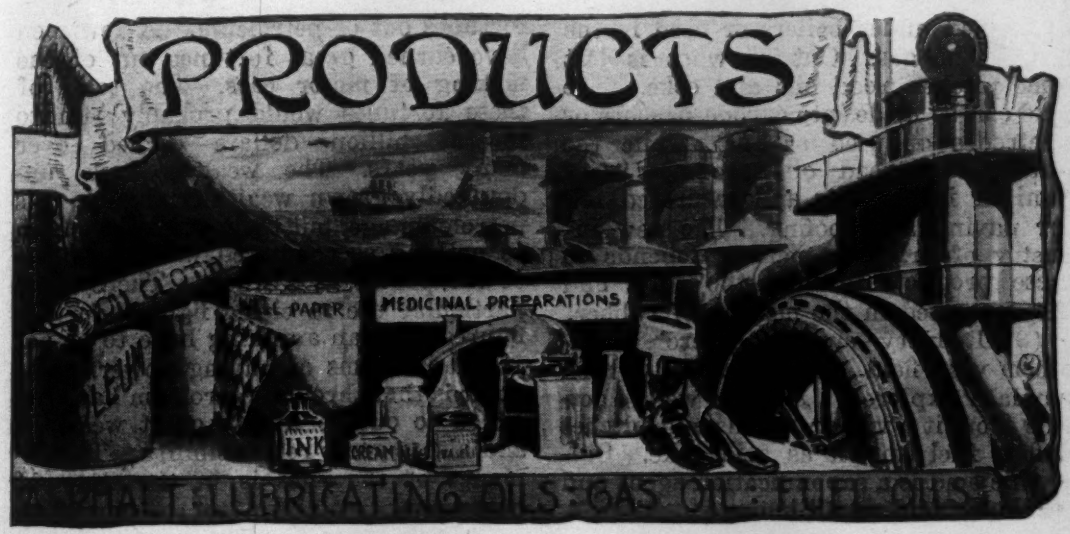
mixed. Each base requires a particular refining treatment and the proportions of the products which may be obtained vary widely. The petroleum in the refining process separates, as was indicated above, into layers. Take these in the order in which they come off:

(1) The hydro-carbon gases. From these we get a number of groups. The liquefied gases are used in metal cutting and illumination. The petroleum ether finds many laboratory uses and is also used to prime motors. Then we have the alcohols, which divide into isopropyl, secondary butyl, secondary amyl and secondary hexyl. The isopropyl group is extremely important and in solutions goes into the making of lacquers, soaps, phenol, gums, resins and so on. Its derivatives comprise a great number of technical chemical products which are used in dye making and in the arts. Gas black comes in this general division and serves to color our inks and paints. Then we have fuel gas and finally the light naphthas, which are combined with the next great subdivision:

(2) The white distillates. These divide primarily into the naphthas and the refined oils and are commercially the most important. The naphthas, taken in combination with the light naphthas from the hydro-carbon gases division, are divided into light, intermediate, and heavy naphthas. The light naphthas give the sort of gasoline which is used for house lighting; pentane, which has been adopted as the illuminant in candle power standardization; hexane, which is used in the laboratory; and a number of chemical solvents used largely in drug extraction. From the intermediate and the heavy naphthas comes the principal product—motor gasoline—and a particularly fine variety known as aviation gasoline. Then we have the solvents used in rubber making and in the big fatty oil industry; blending naphtha, which is used as a solvent in making varnish and by painters for many uses; and the benzine used by dyers and cleaners. The refined oils yield kerosene, signal oil, mineral seal oil, used in ship lights and on vehicles.

(3) Intermediate distillates. These subdivide into gas oil and absorber oil. The gas oil, which is the principal ingredient, is used for the carburetion of water gas—the gas the public service companies now sells us. It is also "cracked" into gasoline—which, by the way, cuts down the amount available for house gas. It is used in many metarllurgical processes. From the absorber oil is now recovered gasoline and benzol.

(4) Heavy distillates. This is another important division because from it comes most of the oils and waxes. It has three general divisions—technical heavy oil, wax and lubricating oil. From the heavy oil come the white oils, which are used by the bakers in their machinery, and by the candy makers, the fruit packers and the egg packers to improve the appearance of their products. And also from the white oils come the medicinal oils, some of which are used internally and others form the base of most salves, creams and ointments. The saturating oils are used



in wool and twine making. The emulsifying oils are used largely in making easier the way of the cutting tools. The electrical industry requires a large quantity of special oil for transformers and switches, where an ordinary oil would do damage. A not unimportant division comprises the flotation oils, used in metal recovery processes.

The waxes come into our lives in no end of ways and there is a special wax for each use. Many candies have a wax base. The candles we ordinarily buy are petroleum products. So is the wax now used in the laundry. So is our sealing wax. A special wax is used by etchers. A saturating wax coats cardboard or paper and it is out of it that wax matches are made. And a wax goes into the making of chewing gum.

The lubricating oil divides into more than a dozen different sorts of oils and greases. Finding the right sort of oil to use has become a science in itself.

(5) Residues. All of the preceding division of heavy distillates used to be thrown away, but it is only lately, comparatively speaking, that the residues were thought to be worth anything. Now they are very valuable. A part can be used in the heavy black lubricating oils and another part as greases. There is gear grease, and switch grease, and cup grease, and in addition the petrolatum, from which come petroleum jelly, vaseline, and a variety of salves, creams, and ointments and other compounds. A still further use is in fine lubrication and in the coating of metal to preserve it from rust. After the grease is a residual fuel oil, which can be burned under boilers or used in the making of gas. Out of what is left come pitches, road oils and coke. The coke can be made into carbon brushes or electrodes or used as fuel, while the pitches and road oils are now very familiar in asphalts and saturated felt for paving and roofing. The new industry of briquette-making depends on these products to bind the culm and they are used in the making of rubber.

(6) Refinery sludges. Here is another vast field which has only been partially explored. Already we are getting from it a variety of oils and pitches and a fuel known as acid coke. Sulphonic acid is a saponification agent and sulphuric acid we all know.

Nine-tenths of all the products listed above have come into widespread commercial use within the past twenty years and no one can calculate how much they have added to the wealth of the United States and to the world. For it must always be remembered that, excepting kerosene and a few other easily obtained derivatives, all this wealth contained in petroleum was formerly simply so much waste. We have not only the wealth of many millions of added horse power but also the wealth of new and useful substances created out of what was previously supposed to be nothing at all.

It is applied power and applied science which together make for human liberty, because they make for economic independence. Political formulas do not free men. The best that they can do is to state the terms of a previously acquired economic independence. Wealth which is already in existence never can give more than a meal or two.

Here in the United States we use on an average three and a half horse power per worker. In England the average is only one and a half horse power. On the Continent it is still lower. In the Orient it is but a tiny fraction. The United States to-day is, broadly speaking, without poverty. We have some poverty. A little of it is involuntary, but most of it is voluntary. And one of the largest factors in raising our standards has been the immense amount of power introduced into our lives by the coordination of the petroleum and the automotive industries. That new wealth does not belong to any one in particular. A number of men have earned great fortunes out of petroleum. A few men have earned great fortunes out of the making of motor cars. The total of these fortunes would probably run to several billion dollars—earned over many years. The wealthy have undoubtedly grown wealthier during this petroleum age, but their gains have been as nothing as compared with the gains of the people as a whole. There is no particular use in citing figures, for the figures to mean anything have to be adjusted in terms of buying power. The point is that through petroleum has been added to our country a great wealth—and also a great responsibility. The romance of the ages is in the story of petroleum.

THE KLANSWOMAN

By WARD TRAIL

Illustrated by Joseph Maturo

"You do not believe in angels? I do. They come into my office sometimes on the queerest missions."

WHEN Phoebe Amelia reached the office that morning, she sensed the fact instantly that the day held possibilities. In the first place, Miss Keenan, the Boss' secretary had already phoned that she was indulging in neuralgia and would not be down, and that Phoebe Amelia was to take care of the Boss' work. Phoebe Amelia was not so very fond of the Boss, but on the other hand she was not afraid of him, as were all the other stenographers who were at all capable of taking his dictation. The Boss had just returned from a three-day trip to New York, which meant that there would be a lot of mail to answer and that the Boss would very likely be out of humor. When in humor, he was no saint.

The buzzer on Miss Keenan's desk rang furiously and Phoebe Amelia went to answer it. The buzzer continued to ring. With a feeling approaching but not touching alarm she opened the door. An exceedingly personable young man

was perched on the corner of the Boss' desk. For a long moment Phoebe Amelia hesitated.

"Did you ring?" she inquired mildly.

"No!" roared Mr. Calder. "Where's Miss Keenan?"

"Miss Keenan telephoned that she was ill and directed that I should take your work to-day."

"Oh, she did? Well, don't come into this office again until I ring. Do you hear?"

"Oh, yes. Will you please ask your caller to sit off the button so I can tell when you do ring?"

The young man moved hastily away from the buzzer button. Mr. Calder was very red in the face. It was evident that the young man's errand was not making him happy. Phoebe Amelia withdrew with all the dignity at the command of her five feet two.

At ten Miss Keenan's buzzer rang again. Phoebe Amelia sent Peddie to find out whether any one was sitting on the button. No one was. The presence of Phoebe Amelia was desired instantly.

"Take 'sletter."

For an hour 'sletters were given and taken. Mr. Calder was an erratic dictator but Phoebe Amelia was a whiz of a stenographer. She could eat up work like that and at the same time discover that Mr. Calder had been bending, if not breaking, the Volstead Law, that his hands were very unsteady and that he bit savagely and unhappily at his unlighted cigar.

" 'Sall. Send Peddie."

Phoebe Amelia went out wondering what kind of a woman Mrs. Calder was. In all the gossip of the large office she had never heard any one say. Perhaps she was young and very beautiful. Phoebe Amelia shuddered with sympathy for her. What a man to be married to! Her nineteen year old imagination took hold of that and played around with it all the time she was typing the letters she had taken. Just as she was finishing the last line the buzzer rang again. She took the letters in with her to be signed.

"Finish?"

There was surprise in the tone.

"Yes."

"Ever take notes at a meetin' ? "

"No."

"Could you?"

"Yes."

" 'S woman's meetin'?"

"Where?"

"Home. Wife wants secretary. Car's downstairs. Getcha hat."

"What do I have to do?"

"Wife'll tell you."

He waved her away, just like that.

"Well," said Phoebe Amelia, to herself, "it seems that I am to find out what friend wife looks like."

Mrs. Calder had left instructions that the secretary should be sent immediately to the drawing room. Women began to arrive and presently the room was almost uncomfortably filled. Mrs. Calder was not young and she was not beautiful. But she *was* efficient! Poor Phoebe Amelia! Mrs. Calder paid her such scant attention that she did not notice her substitution for Miss Keenan, who was thirty-five, inclined to stoutness and slightly gray. The stationery on the desk at which she had been seated informed her that she was attending the Women's Welfare Union. She was crisply instructed to head her notes, "Third Monthly Meeting." There came reports from committees and snappy speeches. Dental inspection in the schools must have been very interesting from the amount of time given to it. Phoebe Amelia had time to sketch three stunning hats before they turned to anything that she considered a live subject.

They went at the Ku Klux Klan with hammer and tongs. All her speed was required to keep pace with what those women knew about the pernicious activities of the klan. Of course, nothing had actually happened in Washington, but it was a very dangerous organization, openly flouting the law and setting at naught the personal rights of individuals, and something should be done about it. The suggestions as to what should be done were rather vague. Phoebe Amelia was intensely interested. She had more than a sneaking suspicion that her young brother and Jimmie Curtis both belonged to the klan. The worse it grew under the hot tongues, the more romantic her semi-connection with it seemed. Jimmie Curtis gradually assumed more heroic proportions. Finally a committee was appointed to investigate the attitude of Congress toward the matter, and another subject was taken up.

The next subject was prohibition, and the human-interest twist given it was the way it affected the servant problem. Mrs. Calder gave a graphic description of the influence of non-enforcement as it had come to her personal attention. For many years she had enjoyed the services of a perfect laundress of ebony hue and then, one day, this negress had come, not to work, but arrayed in much purple and fine linen, to say nothing of fur and feathers, to tell her that she was not doing washing any more. No, her husband was a bootlegger and made so much money she didn't have to. She was subletting her back yard to another lady because her yard was so fine for drying. Perhaps the lady who was subletting the fine drying back yard might take on the work. If Mrs. Calder desired, she would speak for her. Mrs. Calder did so desire. The retired one spoke and the subletter appeared. This woman, who was very anxious to obtain the work, and who really did it almost as well as the old one, was a white woman who said her husband was drinking so much she had to take in washing to support her five children.

"Ladies, this is an actual occurrence. This white woman, deserted by her husband for the stuff bootleggers sell, is a challenge to the Woman's Welfare Union. We must do something. But for an accident of birth, any one of us might be deserted, as she is."

One detail after another was related about the reversed positions of the two laundresses. Phoebe Amelia began to get the pieces in place. She knew both of them. Her mother had had the same experience with the same two women. This was getting somewhere and it really was a shame. The opulent bootlegger lived near her home. His house faced the other street but his fine drying yard backed up to the alley at which her own yard ended. She knew the man when she saw him—Old Ben. He used to teach history at All Angels, a private school for colored children. And it was true that Mrs. Hillary used that yard when she had more clothes than her own yard would hold, though she lived a whole block below. Poor Mrs. Hillary! She was very deaf. Perhaps she might have done something about Mr. Hillary before it was too late if she had had all her faculties. Phoebe Amelia's young heart burned with this woman's wrongs. She was glad she had come to this meeting. She was glad there were women who did not have to work for a living and so had time to attend to things like this—community things. It made her feel bigger just to sit there and pot-hook down what they were saying. They no longer looked like fashionable nonentities to her. Their faces seemed softer, more motherly. She thought of that wonderful Red Cross poster, The Greatest Mother in the The World, and all the women, even the skinny ones, took on that heavenly kind expression. She wished her own mother could come to meetings like this. Her innocent little mother! She would be perfectly safe at things like this. No one was smoking and there were no refreshments of any kind, as yet. Mechanically her pencil raced. But what were they saying? What were they going to do about law enforcement? Nothing, it seemed. Phoebe Amelia slumped in her chair, the pencil trailed out of her flaccid fingers and fell to the floor with a little click. The sentiment that she wasn't getting down on paper was to the effect that it might be policy to depend more on the steam laundries and so escape the worries entailed by such conditions. The resolution that never got into the minutes was to the effect that a committee be appointed to investigate the attitude of Congress on the matter of better law enforcement!

The meeting thereupon adjourned. Refreshments were served. Phoebe Amelia gathered up her notes energetically. She had missed her lunch. The sandwiches looked good, though small. She wondered if she might dare take more than four?

"The car is waiting to take you back to the office, Miss Keenan," said her suave hostess.

There were little cakes, too. And as Phoebe Amelia docilely went out, the butler passed her with a tray of brimming glasses. The smell had a decided kick in it! As she had been told, the car was waiting.

Phoebe Amelia was so mad by the time she had reached the office, dismissed the mauve chauffeur and slipped around to the little lunch room she patronized, that she could only force down one order of stew and mashed

potatoes, a cream puff, a piece of pie and a single glass of milk.

All afternoon, while she wrote up the minutes of that meeting, her mind was occupied with its new impressions. She had just read a book on logic that one of the boys was using in connection with his Y. M. C. A. night classes, so she tried some of it out. Something should be done and done emphatically. If those women were going to do nothing but appoint committees, some one else should get busy. Who? Well, if the law did not take adequate care of its own enforcement, something beside the law would have to step in. What was there beside the law? Why, the Ku Klux Klan. Now unless the Ku Klux Klan and the bootleggers were synonymous, why couldn't they be sicked on each other, and, in the time honored manner of the gingham dog and the calico cat, be allowed to eat each other up? They could be. She would get some dope from Jimmie Curtis.

At the end of the minutes of the Third Monthly Meeting she pot-hooked her idea of a proper warning for all breakers of the Eighteenth Amendment: "Hear ye! The Spirit of America speaks! Keep ye the law! I have spoken! I shall not speak words again! Signed, Ku Klux Klan."

It was class night at the Y. M. C. A., but when Phoebe Amelia looked up sweetly into his eyes as they were leaving the office and told him she had found that, after all, she would be free to go to the movies with him, Jimmie Curtis was delighted. He was a little dazed, too. For the life of him he couldn't remember asking her to go on this night. But she was a prize to be snatched whenever possible, and Jimmie had been finding it increasingly impossible of late to get a semblance of a date with her. It might mean repeating Kester Number Two next semester, but a fellow couldn't grind away all the time, could he? They went to the movies.

"Jimmie, do bootleggers belong to the Ku Klux Klan?"

"Why ask me?"

"Pooh! Why ask you? Don't I know you belong?"

"To the bootleggers?"

"Now don't be funny. I mean to the Ku Klux Klan. Do you know I have been thinking of you all afternoon?"

Jimmie's head began to enlarge.

"This is so sudden," he countered archly.

"Yes, I have. I have been envying you. You think I mean it when I laugh at you and Will sometimes, but you don't know how much I wish I was a big, brave man and could belong to organizations that do things—not just talk."

"You believe in the personal touch, don't you, little girl?"

Phoebe Amelia winced at that "little girl" stuff, but she gave the boy no sign of her hurt.

"Yes. If I were a Ku Klux Klanner I know just what I'd do."

"What?"

"Well, I'd look after some of this law enforcement, for one thing," explained Phoebe Amelia, a little vaguely.

It wouldn't do to rush Jimmie. She was a good actress. Gazing up into his eyes and telling him how big and brave he was took very little effort, but it almost sprained her brain to imagine him actually doing anything really daring. She'd have to feed him a lot of self esteem before he would be quite ripe for the work she had for him to do.

"You mean this bootlegging business?"

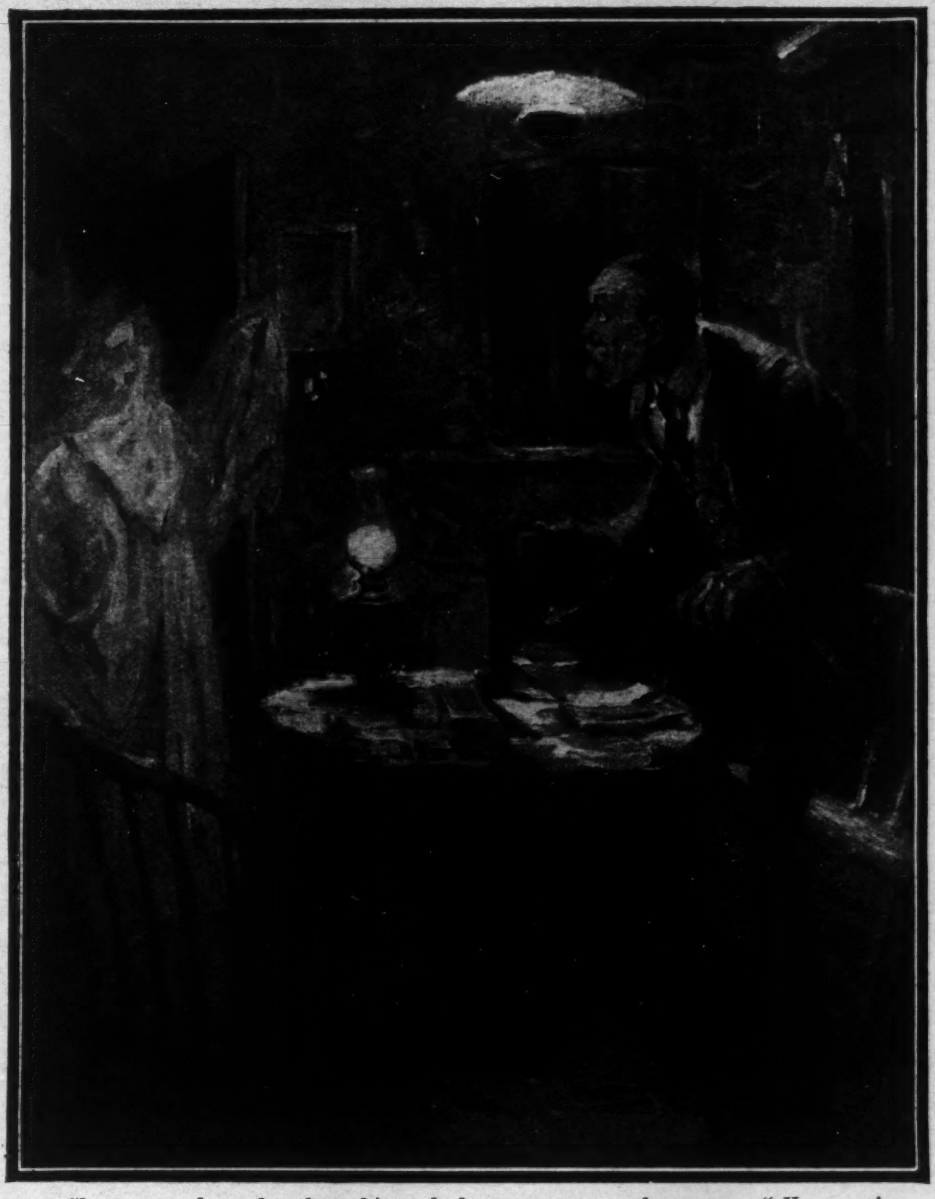
"Well, yes, that. It seems that some force greater than the law is needed to protect the helpless women and children from the awful results of bootlegging. Don't you think so?"

"Who's been suffering that you know?" teased the young man.

"My laundress."

"Ever try a steam laundry? Understand they're on the water wagon."

Phoebe Amelia's eyes blazed, but she kept them carefully lowered. Jimmie was surprised at the real feeling she put into the tale she unfolded of the large, opulent bootlegger and his large, furred and feathered wife with the sublet, fine drying back yard and the deaf, white mother of five deserted children who daily filled that fine drying back yard with hard-washed clothes. The little hand that she had slipped through Jimmie's arm crept along down until he could enfold the small fingers tenderly with his own. Jimmie was entranced. Phoebe Amelia didn't like being pawed and he knew it. This was making him feel very big and brave and manly and



Slow steps brought the white-robed one nearer and nearer. "Hear ye! The Spirit of Am——"

quite all-conquering. Jimmie liked the feeling. How little and dear and trusting she was!

"Jimmie, I know you are so strong and helpful that you can scarcely restrain yourself from starting something this very night!"

"Yeah," said Jimmie vaguely.

How nice it was to hold her hand. He wished that he dared kiss her. But he didn't. Perhaps if he kissed her fingers——

"Then you will?"

"Will what, little one?"

"Get out the klan and clean up on this one bootlegger to-night?"

"The k-klan? Why I never even told you I belonged to the klan! The klan don't do things this way, dear."

How innocent she was! How little she knew of the ways of the world! She certainly needed some strong hand to guide her in her impulsive goodness.

"What way does the klan work, Jimmie?"

Trusting eyes looked way, way up to him.

"Why, they'd likely look into the

thing. Not all of them. They'd appoint a committee——"

"Good night, Jimmie!"

Fortunately they had reached her door and she could break and run before she slapped him! Big, strong man, indeed! Committee! Bah! Klan! Just like women! Well! Gee whiz!

She stood alone in the front hall and beat impotent fists together.

"I do so wish I was a man!"

But the wish was no compliment to her late companion.

It was early. She went back to the living room. Her brother was there, for a wonder, and for a fleeting second she thought of pumping him to find out if she was right in this new view of the klan. But memory of Jimmie's futility flooded her and she gave up the idea. Will would be worse than Jimmie. What if the bloodthirsty klan of ill-fame had petered out to be just a body of old women? Women? Her mother was practical. Mightn't she know something that should be done? The blue bird on your own hearthstone and all that sort of thing?

"I'm glad you're in early, dear. I am so tired I think I'll go right up to bed."

And that settled that. She couldn't bother mother. Mother never complained and if she said she was tired, she was very tired. While her straight little brain revolved about its self-set problem, she mechanically ran upstairs, turned on the light in her mother's room, fixed the shades, turned back the covers and laid out the plain little nightie. She had whisked out again before the slow steps reached the top of the stairs, but when the tired mother saw what the fairy hands had done, she followed her small, slangy daughter into the tiny back bedroom and her eyes were moist as she submitted to a hug.

"Mother's little lady," she whispered, softly.

When she had gone, Phoebe Amelia shook her bobbed head and grinned at her reflection in the mirror.

"Lady? You?" she scorned. "My cat's parasol! If your mother only knew you, dear!"

Yet the young heart thrilled to the high praise and, thinking of her mother's innocence and her own worldlywiseness as she stood looking out over the moonlit back yards, her eyes fell upon the bootlegger's home. All the lines in the fine drying back yard were filled with sheets and pillow cases. There was a light in the bootlegger's back room—his study. His gate to the alley stood open so that the subletter might come and go as she would. She visioned the visitation of the klan as Jimmie might have staged it. There were those sheets waving in the wind. If they had entered at the back of the house there need not have been many. Just a few would look like a host with that background of waving sheets. Why she and Jimmie might have done it! She could have stood back of Jimmie while he delivered the klan's ultimatum. If only she were a man she wouldn't need Jimmie.

Suddenly she drew herself up to her full height. A little thrill of excitement was chasing a little chill that was delicious terror up her spinal column and down again. Then she grew very calm. She could do it, certainly. She was much too short, but if she had lived down the namby-pamby label of Phoebe Amelia and had been accepted as a dead game sport before she was nineteen, why should a little thing like a deficit of a foot or two in height bother, on an adventure that would, at most, take not more than half an hour? It was nine-fifteen.

She pulled a couple of rubber bands across her generously spaced front teeth and tested the resulting change in her voice by a tentatively whispered rehearsal of the ultimatum. She wound a white chiffon veil closely about her brown bobbed locks and slipped out and down the back stairs.

"That you, Phoebe Amelia?" called her mother.

Business of slipping rubber bands.

"Yes, dear. I'm hungry."

"I thought so. Please bring me a couple of crackers and a glass of milk when you come up? No hurry."

"All right."

More business of slipping rubber bands.

She opened the refrigerator noisily before she softly slipped the bolt on the back door. Everything was quiet. The gate had been left unlatched. She went into that other yard and peeped around a sheet into the study. The ebony-hued

bootlegger was there. He was counting out his money! The nerve of him! Deftly she slipped the pins until the sheets hung, not in orderly straightness as they had been placed, but in bunched and separated ghostly folds that flapped and waved in the rising wind. One sheet she took down and draped over herself in klanly style. With ruthless fingers she poked two holes for eyes. It was an old sheet, anyway. Coiled pillow cases under the sheet added height and broadened shoulders.

"I am thy father's ghost," she giggled.

Three slow raps on the study door!

"Yas, Marse Will. The Lord done sont it to him by a angel fum heaben."

At the first sound of shuffling feet within the door opened slowly as if swayed by the wind.

"Wait outside," mysteriously directed a rubber-banded voice.

A ghostly figure entered with measured tread. The sheet was so long that, even if the bootlegger had had an eye for detail, he could not have seen the absurdly tiny pumps. Slow steps brought the white-robed one nearer and nearer. The bootlegger stood, rooted, half risen from his chair, hands on table.

"Hear ye! The Spirit of Am——"

Then before the visitant's horrified eyes, one big black hand left the table and slipped deftly into the half-opened drawer. Up whisked a very business-like revolver — cocked and pointing directly at her! Any kind of gun was to Phoebe Amelia a thing abhorred. Her dry throat closed on her words. He would never dare! She must go on! She *must* get the words out! She tried to remember just what she was going to say.

Mechanically then, she started again, "I am thy father's ghost——"

Again the door opened slowly, swayed by the wind. The full background of waving sheets came into view. Something dark moved fussily among the white shapes.

There was a short sharp struggle between erudition and superstition. In the scuffle the revolver dropped from that huge black hand and its loud report did nothing to stay the steps of that son of darkest Africa. Phoebe Amelia opened her eyes. She was alone! A tiny spiral of acrid, blue smoke curled up from the nose of that awful thing. There were two big piles of money on the table. The bootlegger had been checking it up against a long list of names.

When bulging eyes, looking out of black faces overspread with pallid gray, at last surveyed the study from behind the bulking, blue-coated shoulders of a pair of panting policemen, there were no

ghosts remaining, either in the room or in the yard. No money was on the table. No list of names was visible.

"Good old ghost!" breathed a much-relieved bootlegger.

That list wasn't one he cared to have fall into the hands of the law. The money was only one day's pickings, but it was too much to be explained to any one really inquisitive.

"Good old ghost," he repeated, rubbing oily palms together.

Mrs. Hillary was in the yard taking down her sheets and complaining that the wind had mussed them all up and torn holes in one of them. Her pillow cases she had found in bad shape, too. Surely the witches had been there. No, she said, she had seen no one and heard no shot. They screamed out a lurid description of what had happened in the house, a description the visitant herself could not have identified. In Mrs. Hillary's opinion the bootlegger had been drinking his own poison and good enough for him, too! The policemen were inclined to agree with her.

"That you, Phoebe Amelia?"

"Mmmm," came the reply, mumbled around a generous bite of cold roast-beef sandwich.

"Supper is served," she called gaily, regaining free speech as she carried a brimming glass of cold milk and a small plate of crackers in to her mother.

"Mother's little lady. Thanks a lot. What time is it, dear?"

Phoebe Amelia consulted the clock in the hall with incredulous eyes.

"Half past nine!"

"Why's that so astonishing?"

"N—nothing. Only I thought it must be most morning," mumbled Phoebe Amelia.

She had been gone only fifteen minutes! It seemed incredible! Shucks! After all her trouble she had not delivered that ultimatum. And there was that pesky money. It must be that she had only slipped what she held in one hand into Mrs. Hillary's basket. She had meant to drop it all there as she passed, for surely since the bootlegger had robbed her of her husband's support, it was only right that so much of his unholy gains should go to the deaf mother of five. In her haste to get out of the sheet and free from her entangling alliance with the pillow cases, she must have emptied just her right hand into that basket as she worked feverishly to remove herself from the fine drying back yard before reinforcements should be secured to the enemy by the report of that gun. The veil had wound itself around her left hand, contents and all, and not until she regained the pantry did she find that she had a large roll of bills and a sheet of closely written paper.

Cautiously now she locked her door and investigated her loot. She spread out the piece of crumpled paper. It was a list of names and addresses and telephone numbers. Mr. Calder's name was there—which might or might not have accounted for the interesting smell from those brimming glasses. Opposite the names there were quantities and descriptions. Then followed columns in which dates and money were indicated. She counted the money and was appalled. She had seven thousand dollars there on her bed in her tiny room! What in the world would she do with it? How explain it? Could she still slip it to Mrs. Hillary? But what if that good woman beefed about what she had already received? Suppose Old Ben made a fuss about his loss? And then they should find it in Mrs. Hillary's basket? Mercy! Phoebe Amelia flung herself down on the bed and the bills scattered. She gathered them up carefully. Where could she hide them? Under the rug? No, it was Thursday, and the next day the cleaning woman would sweep the room. Under the mattress? No, for the same reason. The cleaning woman would turn it over. In the bottom of her bureau? Never, with Will and Sister Mary always unceremoniously borrowing things. What *should* she do? Mother? Absolutely not! This was not a trouble for mother to know about. She had got herself into it and she would have to get herself out of it. Logic! She'd try logic. What would a man do under the circumstances? Phoebe Amelia giggled. Appoint a committee, likely. She banded the bills securely together and put them under her pillow.

She went to bed and to sleep.

In the morning she woke with a sensation which, while awful, was rather familiar. She was in a scrape. What was it? Her head cleared with a whang. That money! He-logic didn't help her

so she-logic would have to. She would carry it with her. It would not go into her bag unless she took out her vanity case and, of course, she could not work without that. So she just did, very simply, what she would have done with anything else that was too large to go into her bag and that had to get itself carried. She wrapped it neatly into a brown paper parcel.

All day she was uncomfortably conscious of an untidy mental condition. She had started something that she had not finished. While she had undoubtedly succeeded in frightening Old Ben she had not delivered her message. And she must dispose of that money. Miss Keenan was on the job and she had some time to herself. Thumbing carelessly through her notes she came to her message and idly typed it. That gave her an idea. She would mail it to Old Ben. And that gave her another idea. Why not mail one to each of the names on that list, including Mr. Calder, and adding Mrs. Calder? If men did not buy the stuff Old Ben would not sell it and if women did not use it, men would not buy it—at least not so much of it. There were only fifty-eight. It took some time to decide on a signature. She had no right to use even the initials K. K. K. Anyway she needed something virile. She would sign them, "The Klanswoman." That was herself. She didn't have any klan but she had got along without one last night all right. A klan would really have been in the way. She added a postscript, "The female of the species is more deadly than the male." They were quickly written and mailed.

At dinner she got some news. Mrs. Hillary had sent her little girl to say that she would not be able to do the clothes next week. Mr. Hillary had been on his way home, according to his own story, to start life anew for himself and for his wife and for their five children when he had been run into, almost at his own door, by an animal as large as an elephant that was running at breakneck speed down the pavement. It had come at him, head down, and rammed him amidships, so that his lights went out. They had carried him to Casualty Hospital. Mrs. Hillary had gone there and spent the night watching over him. He was more comfortable now.

"What time did the animal strike him?" asked Phoebe Amelia, in a small voice.

"Animal, your cat's parasol! He was drunk," explained Will.

"Of course, but what time was it?"

"Oh, 'bout nine or a little after. Mrs. Hillary was down in Old Ben's yard getting her clothes. Old Ben went on a spree last night, too, they say. Drank some of his own make, I guess. A gun went off and a lot of the niggers in the neighborhood went in there. Had the police and everything, but it didn't amount to anything. Old Ben was quiet by the time the bluecoats got there. Funny they don't raid that man."

And there had been no word about the money? All that money and nothing said? Will would know about it if there had been any talk and it was clear that he had told all his news.

It was her sister Mary's turn. Didn't they think some one should call at the hospital to see after poor Mr. Hillary?

"Pooh!" scoffed Will.

"No!" roared Father.

Phoebe Amelia wondered at father's vehemence. She swept Sister Mary with a sidelong glance. Clearly Mary was up to something and father was on to it. Mary always managed to slop over so.

"It might be better to call on Mrs. Hillary and see that she and the children do not suffer," suggested mother.

Phoebe Amelia grinned. Mary did not press the point.

"Well, perhaps it was because we are all so interested in the hospital just now that I thought of it," she conceded. "You see, the girls at my office are selling soap for the benefit of Casualty. There is a very pressing need for funds. Would you like to try to sell some for us, Phoebe Amelia?"

"Sell soap at the office? Can't be bothered. Got a hen of my own on."

"A hen, dear? At the office?" Mother was puzzled.

"Just means I'm too busy to be bothered with hospital benefits, Mother. My cat's parasol, Mary, I work!"

"But the hospital is really in need of funds. Don't you ever do anything useful?" persisted Mary.

Didn't she, though? And a great idea was born.

"Give us some soap and we'll try it," she conceded cautiously.

As the family was leaving the table, the large, furred and feathered wife of Old Ben, in all her purple and fine linen, appeared from the kitchen.

"I'se come to say I'll do yo' all's washing ag'in. Ben done got religion all over ag'in, hard, and I got to wuk like I done befo' he dun slipped offen de straight and narrer path."

"Very well," said mother.

"Got religion?" grinned Will.

"Yas, Marse Will. The Lord done sont it to him by a angel fum heaben—all white—all white——"

Scared eyeballs rolled at memory of Old Ben's description.

Phoebe Amelia slipped out with her brown paper parcel. Now, wasn't that just her luck? Here she was "a angel fum heaben," and she couldn't answer present and get the credit that was her due! And Mary asking if she never did anything to help!

She went by a circuitous route to Casualty Hospital and asked for the doctor who was in charge. There was a wait of nearly an hour in the ethery place before she was ushered into the doctor's office. A stiffly starched nurse was busy at a small desk by the window. To her utter dismay, Phoebe Amelia saw that the white coated doctor was the young man she had found sitting on the Boss' buzzer button the day before. Even in her consternation at her own predicament, she spared a grin of understanding of Mary's sudden interest in the financial condition of this hospital. The doctor had evidently solicited funds at Mary's office, too. It would certainly be embarrassing to have to ask him for a private interview but it would be necessary. She positively could not deliver that brown paper parcel in the presence of that very correct young nurse.

"Please, are you the doctor in charge of this hospital?"

"I have that honor. What can I do for you?"

"Please, it is very important—very private—" she stammered, and glanced at the window. The nurse had gone out silently.

"We are alone, you see," said the doctor, gravely. "Will you be seated?"

Phoebe Amelia perched on the edge of the straight chair. She had expected to find a fatherly man with gray hair and perhaps a beard, but she certainly could not carry that parcel around with her for the rest of her life and the hospital offered the only plausible repository that she could think of.

"Please, doctor, I'm sorry, but I will have to ask you to treat this as a privileged communication. You know what I mean?"

"I have heard of such communications. They are, of course, very unusual and very sacred."

The doctor's tone was gravely reassuring. He discreetly kept his dancing eyes lowered.

"What seems to be the principal trouble?" he asked encouragingly.

"Does this hospital need money?"

"It does. This is not a privileged communication. I will be glad to have you tell as many people as you can get to stand and listen."

"Here!"

Phoebe Amelia handed over the parcel. The doctor took it and looked at her questioningly.

"Open it."

Rather cautiously, the firm, white fingers untied the pink string and, more cautiously still, unrolled the stiff paper. There lay the money.

"How much is it?" he breathed.

"Six thousand nine hundred and ninety dollars. There were seven thousand, but I can turn in ten extra dollars to my sister Mary."

"Where did you get it?"

"That," said Phoebe Amelia, earnestly, "is the privileged communication. I can't tell you."

The doctor pushed the money back on his desk and stared frankly at the girl. She looked perfectly normal. He had a flapper sister of his own, too. He waited.

"I want you to use that money for the hospital. The hospital has to take care of people like Mr. Hillary and other people that bootleggers sell liquor to, doesn't it?"

"It does."

Phoebe Amelia rose. The interview, so far as she was concerned, was satisfactorily concluded.

"But my dear child, you must tell me who is giving this money. Are you sure you can afford it?"

"I'm sure I can't afford not to! It isn't mine. Some girls in my sister's office are selling soap for this hospital

and I didn't get this money that way, so I can't turn over seven thousand dollars to them without a lot of tiresome explanations, can I? You see, an angel from heaven got it. I am just the instrument through which the money is coming to this hospital. The angel left no instructions."

"May I ask whether or not seven thousand dollars was all that came into your possession?"

"No. There was a lot more. I didn't count it. I didn't keep it a minute. That went to a poor woman who washes."

"Ah. Seven is such a perfect number. I was wondering if the angel did not just say, 'We are seven,' or something like that, as she fluttered the money to you?"

"You do not believe in angels?" —stiffly.

"I do. You might not believe it, but they come into my office sometimes on the queerest missions."

Phoebe Amelia's lips twitched. He was too perfect for words!

She reached for the door knob.

"Just a moment. Let me see your tongue."

Obediently Phoebe Amelia opened her mouth and stuck out a very pink little tongue.

"Further," ordered the doctor.

She stuck it out as far as it would go and instinctively closed her eyes as he bent over her.

"All right. Clean tongue. Straight eyes. The privileged communication is accepted. Some day when you want to tell somebody all the harrowing details of this instrumentality, just remember that Dr. Stuart is here waiting."

The doctor was very tall. He placed his hand on her shoulder and tipped up her chin with one long finger. Her cat's parasol! He was going to spoil it all, and he had been so perfect! He thought her a child! He was going to kiss her!

"Please, I'm nineteen," she gasped, and was horribly disconcerted to feel that she was blushing furiously. It had been months since she had blushed. Was she getting childish?

Regretfully the doctor removed his hand from her shoulder. He released her chin and smothered a cough in a hastily produced handkerchief.

"I really beg your pardon! If you are only nineteen you can have no interest in the suggestion I was about to make. I can see that you are young."

Phoebe Amelia rose to the bait.

"How can you be sure unless you make the suggestion? I am really very much interested in most anything," she invited.

"I was merely going to suggest that you come in some day soon and allow me to give you a free treatment by my new method for removing wrinkles," was the casually grave reply. "This hospital would be glad to make some such slight return for your instrumentality."

Phoebe Amelia gasped. She knew that the money had been an awful burden, but wrinkles! She'd had it less than twenty-four hours. Perhaps it was the fright when the gun went off?

"Thank you. You are very kind," she stammered.

The doctor bowed her out and hoped sincerely that she was out of earshot before his hilarious laughter became uncontrollable. He knew more about the identity of the animal that had bowled over the rather sodden Mr. Hillary than most people and he knew about the money that had been thrust into Mrs. Hillary's basket. That, too, had been a privileged communication. He even knew about the holes that had been poked in the sheet. Now he knew the identity of Old Ben's "angel!" And he knew who Phoebe Amelia was and where she lived.

"The spunk of her!" he exulted, as he went to meet a new committee.

Phoebe Amelia hurried home. It was a relief to be rid of that money, but wrinkles! She consulted her mirror anxiously. Here she had been worrying about looking not quite grown up, when she no longer looked young! Vigorously she applied cold cream borrowed from her sister Mary's dressing table.

"They say old age slips up on some folks unawares, but, my cat's parasol, I might never have caught on, if he hadn't called me!

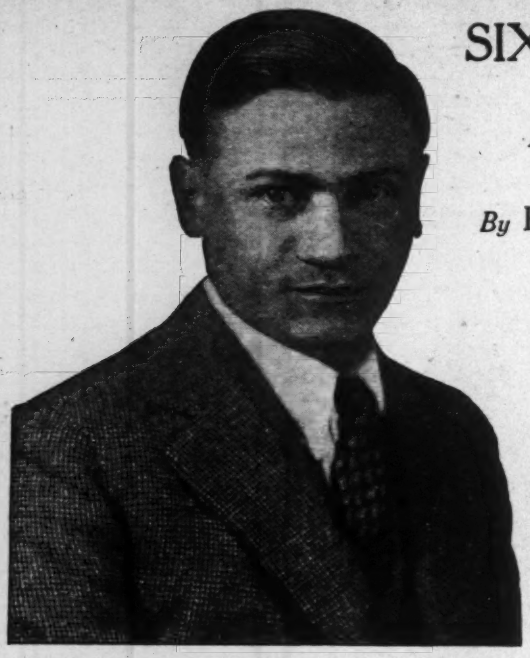
"The very nicest man I've ever seen in my whole life, too," she murmured. "My, I bet he can do things without appointing any stupid committees! If I hurry to bed and get a lot of beauty sleep, maybe I won't look so haggard next time he sees me!"

The possibility that there might be no "next time" never entered her head.

SIXTY MILLION BOOKS

Haldeman-Julius' First Five Years

By HERBERT FLINT *and* VIOLA ROSEBORO'



E. Haldeman-Julius, the 35-year-old publisher of the five cent classics.

YES, he has sold 60,000,000 books in his first five years as a publisher—and that means in the last five years. That is not the big thing either, certainly not the true achievement. The richness of his success lies in this: he has sold the best literature in the world to that incredible tune.

In the smoking car the men were vigorously discussing evolution; then went on to heredity and fetched up in a thoughtful tussle with the question of what art does or does not do to morals. And to the eye they looked like such chance-comers as usually take out a brief passing sociability on the day's most ephemeral news, with some of the world's most everlasting stories thrown in.

How came all this mental vivacity and good time? Professors don't travel in packs, and these chaps were not professorial and not acquaintances. But as their interest in the talk and each other warmed, it came out that one was a clerk in a city law office, one was a railroad mechanic, a third a lawyer, while the rest were like unto them for unimposing variety.

How came it that their conversation grew so lively and far ranging?

It was the clerk who began it, he being quite full and overflowing about evolution, as if he had just got his first real news of this mighty concept. And that was about the way it was, as he was frank to tell us when he pulled out of his pockets A History of Evolution, Three Lectures on Evolution, Huxley's Reflections on Science, and as many more volumes of the same type.

What kind of pockets had the man? The pockets were the same old pockets, even as another's; it was the books that were novel. Yet not so novel but that the lawyer and the mechanic had their pockets lined with the same make.

They were little blue books, of the series which is spreading like beneficent locusts over the country from Girard, Kansas—of all places. Not that there is anything more against Girard, with its 3,000 inhabitants, than that it is not exactly a publishing center—was not, that is, until the little blue books began to multiply at five and ten cents apiece.

The smoking-car lawyer said he always kept a pile of them on his desk, to be read in his odd moments of leisure. Among others the mechanic had with him was The Tragic Story of Oscar Wilde's Life. It sprang a spirited exchange of views regarding Wilde's artistic debt to Whistler.

The Little Blue Books were functioning according to schedule. They were carefully measured and made to be carried in pockets; they were counted on before they were born to set men in smoking cars and camps and mines and even legislatures talking back and forth about real things, and getting the fun you can't get from pumped-up interchanges about tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum.

Who made and measured and counted on them? There is always a man, and an unusual man, behind any scheme, product or happening which breaks new ground. E. Haldeman-Julius is the way

the father of this scheme, product and happening signs himself, and right there, in his signature, hangs a basketful of evidence and suggestion about him; for what do you think—Julius is the name he got from his Jewish father, but Haldeman he chose to take on from his wife when he got married—Haldeman-Julius one and inseparable for the two of them! It makes the Lucy Stone League look antiquated, doesn't it? Yes, here is a modern man and a modern marriage and a modern business and even a modern fortune to cheer up those lovers of their kind who get spells of feeling that the current brand of democracy is making the world unsafe for everybody but money-grabbers. Mr. Haldeman-Julius would say one gets disheartened by staying too much in cities. He says that America is R. F. D. and he likes to calculate how his blue books load up the rural free delivery.

Certainly Kansas has done it again, once more done something unprecedented, against the rules, overwhelming; she has opened a flood that spreads further and means more than any of her drouths ever did. The Publisher's Weekly, the recognized organ of the trade, says that Mr. Haldeman-Julius has "built up, from the standpoint of quantity at least, the greatest publishing business ever in existence."

"From the standpoint of quantity"—all that means is that quantity is the one side of the matter which can be measured by arithmetic and where comparisons are altogether independent of opinion. But it would be a queer opinion that did not mark the quality of a series which runs from Euripedes through the most of Shakespeare and on to Hardy, beside furnishing such different pabulum as the smoking-car was pre-occupied with.

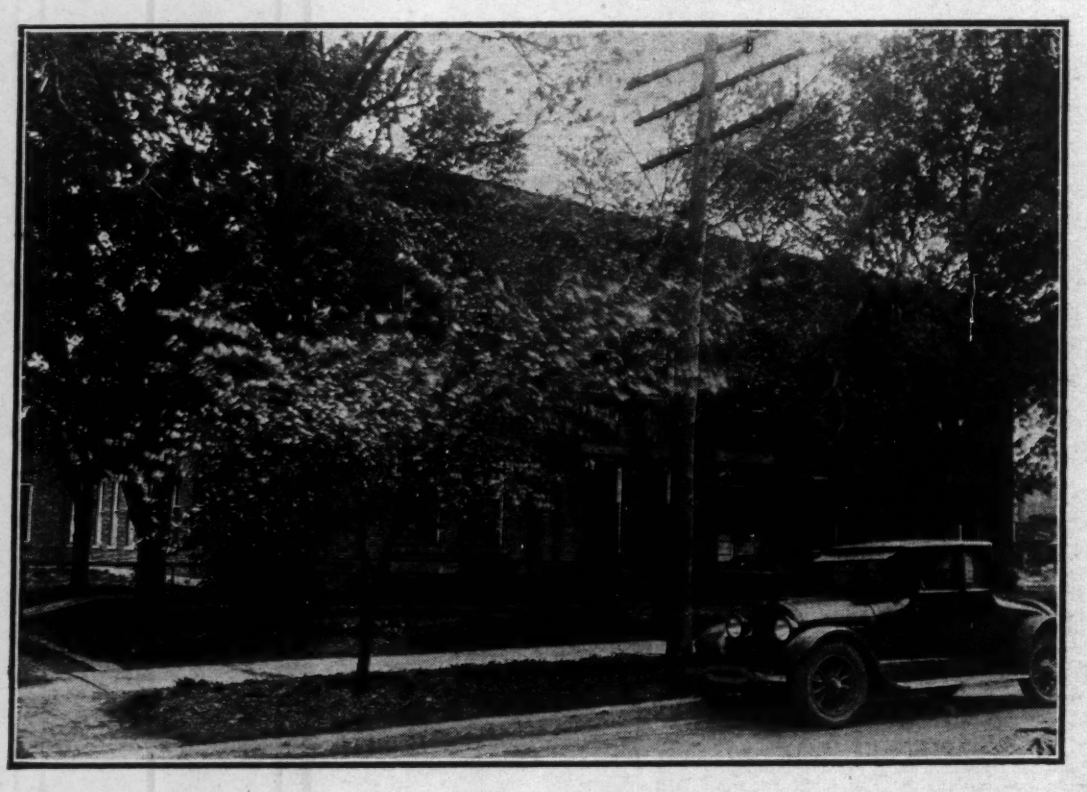
"But the man saves himself and makes money with popular twaddles and poisons?" Not a bit of it—as to twaddles and poisons, the popularity is another affair. Everything here is either undisputed literature, or literature that is disputing its right of way sturdily. Here is no low-grade made-to-sell stuff.

Haldeman-Julius at work in the study at his home.

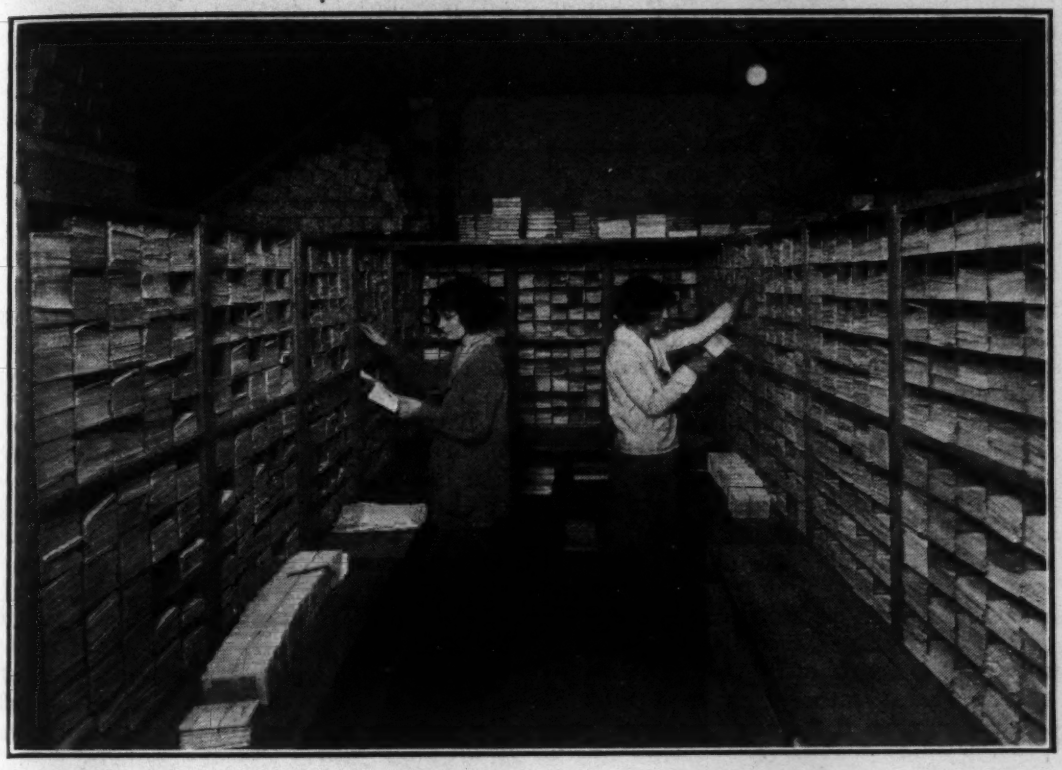
But these great works and modern brilliancies and serious studies, these Little Blue Books of Dante and Shaw, of Tolstoy and Anatole France, of history and science, they are the ones popular enough to sell 60,000,000 within five years.

Five years ago, E. Haldeman-Julius had a two-story printing plant, a big debt and an untried idea. The tap-root of his idea was that his fellow-Americans wanted to read and improve themselves the same way he did. It was his conviction that all sorts and conditions of men would buy good books if they did not have to gamble too big sums on their experiments with untasted immortals, and if the books were put up in a shape that would slip easily into a pocket. That matter of size he felt was vital and considered it accordingly. A branch of this root idea was concerned with the unalterable democracy of Nature. However men fence themselves apart, "common" people on one side and superior labels on the other, she goes right on dropping genius and inspirations and powers around and about with no more respect for the fences than if they were a child's chalk marks. But on the poor folks' side of the fence it has always been hard for the Lincolns and Bunyans to get the books that would feed them and that they hungered for, and while some such managed it, the existence of mute inglorious Miltons who did not is a scientific biological deduction. This man believed that good heads, on R. F. D. routes or anywhere else, did or would delight in good books; would, if they could get at them.

The story of E. Haldeman-Julius as writer and publisher, founder of what he cherishes as a University of Print, may be said to start with a biting November twilight of the panic year 1907 and in Madison Square, New York. The park benches were filled with the shivering figures of the unemployed—men and women alike, young and old, some still scanning the tattered "help wanted" sections of the day's papers, others slumped down into the attitudes of those resigned to another night of hunger and cold. In an open space a crowd had gathered about a venerable



One of the three buildings at Girard, Kansas, where millions of Little Blue Books are published.



The filing room where hundreds of miniature copies of the world's greatest writers are always on hand.

preacher conducting an amazing enterprise significant of twentieth century industrial conditions. He was auctioning off beds for the shelterless at fifteen cents. Literally, he was auctioning off the one who was to sleep. The patriarch would mount a discouraged working man on an old soap box, exhibit him like a work of art, and gruffly demand of the passerby: "Here! Look at this man—slept out on a bench last night. How'd you like to do that? Come! Who'll buy him a bed to-night? Only fifteen cents will give this man a warm bed." Some one would toss out a quarter, or maybe some one wouldn't.

Watching this strange performance, and himself little better off than those under the hammer, was young Julius, aged 18, bell-boy at the Castle School for Girls at Tarrytown, N. Y., seeing city life in the crude, and inexpressibly shocked at this naked exhibition of the ruthlessness of the modern economic machine. He went home and poured out his feelings on paper—a production, he will now tell you, "done in the grand style, very dramatic, and full of fine writing." He sent it to the New York Call, and not only was it run as an editorial, but it also won him an opportunity, which he gladly seized, to work there as a reporter at $12 a week.

Few literary men have come to their work less prepared in a technical way than was Haldeman-Julius. His father was a none-too-prosperous book-binder, and he, born in Philadelphia in 1889, left school when only thirteen, without going beyond the tenth grade. Presently he was holding copy in the proof room of the old Philadelphia Press. New York called, and the answer was that job as bell-boy in Tarrytown. Its great consolation for him was the school's library, where he read, he says, as he has never been able to read since.

"The great thing with me those days was books," he will tell you. "Seeing a book I could not afford to buy was worse than being hungry and looking at a bun in a bakery window. The bun was easier to get than the book, even in 1907. I could not afford to pay $1.50 for a book, and I wondered why some one did not publish books in paper covers at prices

that the poorest could afford. So I have a satisfaction in doing for others to-day what I could not do then for myself—in helping gratify hungers for good books."

Before he left New York for Kansas in 1915 Haldeman-Julius had risen to the position of Sunday editor of the New York Call and he wrote weekly a page devoted mainly to books. By that time he had attained the vantage ground of a sensible, human, wittily perspicacious conception of literature and life. He could not have all the shades of cultivation that go with a wide university training when it is good and "takes" right, but he was as free as a bird from any liking for the cages—cages wired with all sorts of learned superstitions—which are the refuge of those people whom "education" has only dehumanized.

He continued as human as when pity had made the boy a socialist, and he had acquired a sense of values that could not be fooled into seeing literature in buncombe even if it were the most "advanced" buncombe, or denying it to such conservatives as Shakespeare or Kipling or some new chap of some old political faith. He did not worship at any literary shrine because it was old, neither at any because it was the last thing in modernity; he was susceptible to an endless variety of pleasures from print and he got them without being befuddled by any labels of either time or fashion. Nothing more is needed to make a man one in millions when it comes to picking literary winners. Yes, one thing more is imperative: he must trust in his own reactions and not go chasing and worrying after possible best sellers he does not like, but that he hopes will make him rich. E. Haldeman-Julius had and has this rare sincerity too. He could make his university catholic because he likes many books of many kinds himself. He hungers for culture and knowledge and goes on hungering for them. There is his greatest distinction: that success is not changing the interests he began with. He believes such books as he is broadcasting "deepen the emotions"—these are his words to-day—"broaden the outlook, give men a more ordered and meaningful relation to life.

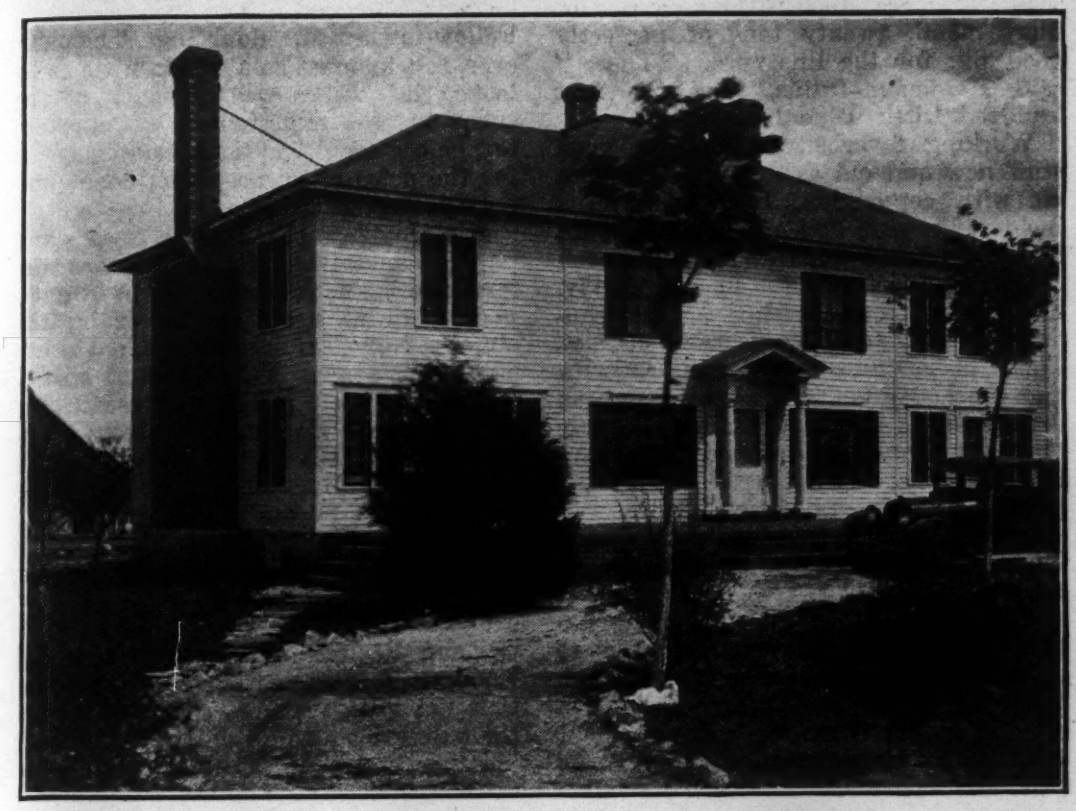
"I see in the Little Blue Books a kindred spirit to that which moved Diderot and his fellows in preparing the immense Encyclopedia. That was a work of 20 years. The Little Blue Books have only five years behind them. Think what they will be in twenty."

How did he start five years ago to put these ideas across? What books did he begin with? What were the works that would found the university that was to deepen men's natures and ameliorate their fates by enlarging their outlooks, and achieve all this by selling in the millions?

Wait a moment and we will see.

The scene shifts to war time and Girard, Kansas. There Haldeman-Julius had come in 1915, dreaming his dream of cheap good books, to take an editorial position on The Appeal to Reason, a Socialist weekly. America's entrance into the World War and the death of the paper's founder and chief owner undermined it; in 1918 Haldeman-Julius bought it, assuming a heavy debt and prepared to move toward his great goal. To begin with he would turn the paper into a literary journal.

But how overnight to change a political weekly with a circulation of 40,000 and nearly thirty years of accumulated political prejudices into a literary weekly with no biases or dogmas was a problem not included in the new publisher's agenda. Would he have any readers left? He pondered. Should he do it gradually, or must the stroke be instantaneous and clean-cut? He went to Kansas City, still turning the problem over in his mind. He went to a hotel, went to bed, slept. When he woke his mind was made up. The way to do it was to do it. Knowing that what he had in mind would be news, he picked up the telephone and called the Kansas City Star, told them who he was, and said that the Appeal as a political weekly had ceased to be. "From now on," he said, "I believe in salvation through culture rather than through the vote." The Star gave the story a column on the front page, headed, "Organ of Reds Dies." Haldeman-Julius had the story photographed, a large plate made, and hurrying back to Girard, he spread the new name, "The Haldeman-Julius Weekly," over the top of the edition then ready for the press. Then he announced the death of politics and the



The country home of E. Haldeman-Julius is on a 160-acre farm near Girard.

birth of culture by reproducing the Kansas City Star story. It was done — come what might, offend as he must many of the weekly's readers. It cost him 125,000 subscribers — hardly a cheerful beginning for a debtor-publisher; but the plunge was taken; now he must sink or swim.

So his next move was to start his little book series on a hand press. He chose two poems to begin with, and philosophical poems at that: The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam and Fitzgerald and Oscard Wilde's Ballad of Reading Gaol! Did the moon ever look down on such lunacy before? Even he justified these choices by telling himself that if people would buy them they would buy anything he wanted to sell them.

He set up the poems and ran off five hundred copies each on the hand press. It was a momentous occasion for him, and for his employees as well, many of whom had been with the plant for more than a decade. The hand press was slow to feed, and it accomodated only eight book pages to a sheet, and the folding and assembling were done by hand. Haldeman-Julius offered the books at twenty-five cents each through the columns of his weekly.

His plant was equipped with newspaper machinery that with his related debts made his stake $75,000; a weekly overhead of several thousand dollars; nearly a hundred employees who must suffer if he failed, and no previous experience as a publisher. Whatever was going to save him must come quick. It did.

The twenty-five cent books sold. They sold so many and so speedily that the agony was over before it had begun, because you see, after all the new publisher knew beforehand how it was going to be — almost knew! So how to make more little cheap books—that was the only problem that was bothering him now.

In one corner of the plant were 600,000 linotype slugs, the leaden ashes of the subscription list to the old weekly, junked when a better method of handling the bulky mailing list had been de-

vised. There stood 40,000 pounds of inert metal, twenty tons of perfectly good pig for the linotypes. "There," said Haldeman-Julius, "are the first hundred Little Blue Books."

Working feverishly with such good stuff new and old as did not fend him off with copyrights, Haldeman-Julius inside of a year had got out 100 books and had offered them at ten cents each through advertisements in his weekly. He was set from the start against confining himself to the consecrated classics. There is no question but free America and especially young America has been drawn to his standard authors because they saw them sandwiched in among others who are still barred out by the cut-and-dried dogmatizers. Here was assurance that no one-sided propaganda in favor of mummies was being attempted.

He felt sure that by advertising nationally he could sell enough books to warrant mass production at a much lower unit cost. And so, trembling with eagerness, he wrote an advertisement for a St. Louis paper offering the books generally through the mails. It was another step in the dark. First, enormously successful mail-order advertising of anything, even in the hands of the experienced, is comparatively rare. Second, the trail had not been blazed in the field of merchandizing books by mail on a large scale at a low price. How did he know it would pay? He couldn't tell until he tried. He tried. Within a week it had paid several times over. The open road was stretching further and further. Could he sell enough by wider advertising to reduce the price to five cents? He prepared a good old-fashioned "bargain sale" advertisement, cutting his price to five cents and setting a time limit when the price would revert to ten unless he sold enough at five to justify the reduction. Orders flowed in from every part of the country. Such success was unheard of in the publishing business. His books were becoming known all over the world. This Jew was looming up as the Ford among publishers. A creative genius who was blazing a more glorious path of service on principles akin to those of Ford.

All this took nearly five years, and Haldeman-Julius had been meeting new problems at every step. At the start he was no printer and no publisher. Fellow-townsmen, doubting Thomases ever, felt he must be a crank, little as he looked it. There was no mark of the crank on the experienced ex-reporter; but he certainly had a fixation on books for the price of an ice-cream cone; and they preferred the cone.

His troubles began with type and paper themselves. Small he was determined his books should be, to fit one's pocket, to be read on the train, the street-car or elsewhere as one had a few minutes to spare. Yet they must also be legible and well printed on reasonably good paper. He learned about books from these. He finally decided on a book with 35 lines of type to the page, and with 64, 96 and 128 pages, carrying up to 15,000, 24,000 and 30,000 words respectively. Curiously enough, Haldeman-Julius had occasion later to examine the books of the 70-year-old German Reclam series, which now has 7,500 titles. To his surprise he found that the typographical specifications of the two series were practically identical.

Paper and cover stock presented another problem that taught Haldeman-Julius a costly lesson. In the beginning, buying small amounts of book paper, he paid 15 cents a pound. Now, producing 120,000 books a day, he buys in carload lots for 6.25 cents a pound, using many carloads of paper a month. Similarly with his cover stock. At first the Little Blue Books were red and pink indiscriminately, the cover stock costing up to 22 cents a pound. "Red is the most expensive — use blue, it's next to the cheapest, and in car-load lots you can get it for 6.75 cents a pound"—so a paper mill suggested. The Little Blue Books were ultimately named, you see, not through the slogan-writing efforts of an advertising agency, but through the necessity for economy. The color and the name have served adequately.

It is obvious that with all their numerous and striking merits, the Little Blue Books would not be sweeping the country by sheer virtue alone. It was necessary that opportunity should knock loudly at the doors of the reading public in the shape of an enormous and persistent campaign of publicity. One reason why good books have been so neglected in the past is that, for the most part, readers have been left to find them

by accident, to stumble upon them, say, in a dark corner of an old bookstore.

This has not been true of the vast quantities of printed matter which are properly dominated litter rather than literature; its attractions, such as they might be, have been shouted from the housetops. Haldeman-Julius has shouted literature from the housetops. He has brought immortals out of academic

Haldeman-Julius is an enthusiastic horseman.

obscurity into the common light. His appeals to the public, in the name of culture, have rivalled the most prodigious appeals in the name of commerce.

For the first two years he wrote his own advertisements, and on the whole they paid. He made his mistakes, but his ten-strikes more than made up for his errors. Then his work started advertising celebrities making offers to help him increase sales and reduce costs. Hopeful he hearkened, feeling his ignorance more and more as he heard for the first time of "reader resistance," "the psychology of pictures," the merit of hand-lettered headings, the necessity for "punch," the advisability of "getting leads," of using a catalogue, of offering premiums. A woeful year followed while art directors, copy writers, educational experts, office management specialists and high-power executives had their way with him. A suggestion for a Shakespeare contest brought down the postal authorities on him for alleged infringement of the laws governing contests and lotteries. It was an experience that made Haldeman-Julius a cynic on advertising men. Instead of getting returns of three and four to one, as he had, unaided, his advertising ceased to pay. He threw away a small fortune before he realized that his advisers did not know much about his products or his consumers.

He took in their ignorance at last when one of them suggested: "Now the way to sell these books is to offer a premium. Take fifty books, for example, headed by Oscar Wilde's Ballad of Reading Gaol. To every customer who buys the entire fifty, we'll give as a premium the music to the Ballad of Reading Gaol!"

The real trouble was, of course, that being neither readers nor book-hungry, the advertising men were off their range.

There was a house cleaning, advertising manager and all, and Haldeman-Julius began writing his own advertising again. He retained a placing agent on the strict understanding that he was never to call on the long-distance telephone or come around and confer except when called for. Immediately the advertising began to pull once more, reader was speaking to readers. Haldeman-Julius has succeeded unaided with the most difficult sort of advertising in the world—mail-order advertising keyed so that one can check results from all advertisements almost to the penny.

And here is his formula: "I have something good to sell. The public wants it. The price is right — unheard of. I need no advertising lingo. I get the best results by merely printing a list of titles with a convenient order blank. The public already has confidence in my books. People want a book or they don't. The title decides."

With the enormous expansion in sales that followed national advertising, Haldeman-Julius broadened his series. Two hundred books, three hundred, four hundred, he saw, could not cover the field. Again there was no beaten path to follow. He had heard somewhere that fiction came first with the reading public. He is a skeptic. He sent out 15,000 questionnaires asking his readers what were their preferences.

Replies came from 9,000 persons, offerring suggestions of all kinds, and almost without exception selecting good literature. Replies to the question, "What general subjects most interest you?" revealed a significant thing. First place went to history and fiction ranked second, only twelve per cent voting it first choice. Fiction was followed in order by science, philosophy, religion, poetry, travel, essays, economics, drama and some twenty other subjects

The clear index to reader interest was worth a fortune to Haldeman-Julius in his future selection of titles. He set for himself new standards.

"Now," he himself says, "the pocket series has an individuality and freedom of choice that stamp it with an unusual value; while it has the standard titles, the obvious and accepted authors—and let me not be understood as saying that these are anything but good—it has a long list of other titles that can be found in no other collection, that are left out of the ordinary lists of world masterpieces, that are ignored by the schools.

"There are titles in the pocket series that are really rare—that are not to be found elsewhere. There is Sarah Helen Whitman's very interesting study of Poe: Was Poe Immoral? Miss Whitman was a sweetheart of Poe's, and her sketch has long been out of print. Euphorian in Texas, that most amusing, original tale by George Moore is obtainable only in the pocket series. Works like the Love Letters of a Portuguese Nun and How to Live 100 Years are little known classics of historical literary value, that have been rescued from oblivion and given to modern readers in the pocket series. Works like Francis Thompson's fine essay on Shelley, Oscar Wilde's Soul of Man Under Socialism and Anatole France's The Human Tragedy are not obtainable in any ordinary, cheap collection; and the first two titles are difficult to find elsewhere than in the pocket series."

Here rings the pride of a real book-worm — the publisher takes second place.

But this is an up-to-date book-worm. The Little Blue Books spread the writings of Anatole France, Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Ibsen, Baudelaire — fiction, drama, poetry, biography, history, science, philosophy, belles-lettres, epigrams — books from all the fields of literature. This editor — he is to the last more an editor than a publisher — this editor is more inclusive than exclusive, more eager to take a chance on a new unsettled value than to guard any reputation for fastidiousness; more interested to discover and honor unknown or neglected genius than to "play safe." With that make-up it is a wonder how high and choice he manages to keep his catholic lists, how minimized are the defects of his qualities. His supreme quality is that he is alive; just as the supreme defect of the merely learned, the purely academic, is that they are intellectually dead. Moreover, he is a writer and an artist himself, keeps on doing creative work even if he cannot do much of it, and there is no measuring its antiseptic value in keeping the

ordinary commercial corruptions away from the most prosperous publisher in the world. We must come back presently to his essays and stories.

Thus orientated, the series advanced until there were several hundred titles. Then it entered a new and vital phase. It had been made up of reprints; now it included originals. This was the way of it: Haldeman-Julius found that he was hampered in the fields of biography, history and science. Biography, history and science were generally to be found in works of quite formidable bulk. It was hard to get short works in these fields that would fit into the series. These fields could not be neglected. They were already represented in the series, it was true, but in nothing like the degree that was desirable and indeed essential. Something could be done — had, in fact, been done — in a way of careful intelligent editing; taking the meat and substance of a book without violating the language or spirit of the author. However, this was not enough if the Little Blue Books were going to make good as a University in Print, and that was Haldeman-Julius' ideal by this time, that the name he must live up to.

The manner in which the problem was solved was a direct and simple extension of the original idea. Little books on biography, history and science were a crying need. As such books were not available they must be specially written. Haldeman-Julius saw, too, that here was a chance to present these subjects in a thoroughly modern spirit. The past of mankind and the development of human thought could be reexamined and revalued: a creative work of noble proportions and far-reaching possibilities. It had, of course, its adventurous aspect. One might have questioned whether brevity could be employed adequately in these fields, so broad are they, and so imposing the voluminous tradition. But Haldeman-Julius was convinced that a man's life, for example, with a solid background of his time, could be well told, with fascination, in a little book. To-day one finds among the Little Blue Books brief biographies of Sterne, Addison, Thoreau, Wilde, Swift, Dr. Johnson, Napoleon, Shakespeare— these are names that readily present themselves; a biographical history of philosophy, not yet complete; and a very important series of little books, not simply scientific theory, but of interesting human narrative in which is recorded the evolutionary drama of the race. To-day Haldeman-Julius has more than thirty authors and scholars in all parts of the world working for him. As his list of titles has grown, so have his own vision and outlook. He has even had books written solely for his own information, to guide him in his selection of subsequent volumes.

Now, realizing more keenly than ever that the sweep of his work is international, that he has the whole world of literature to draw upon, he is hard at work giving different countries their proper literary representation. German literature, for example, is as yet almost wholly unpresented by the Little Blue Books. To remedy this Haldeman-Julius has set Ludwig Lewisohn, Dr. Kuno Francke, Miss Margaret Muensterberg, Professor Gobel of the University of Chicago, Professor J. A. Walz of Harvard, Dr. Bayard Quincey Morgan of the University of Wisconsin and others at work on his proposed schedule of German classics. For instance, Professor Gobel is editing Goethe; Professor Walz is writing an interpretive essay on Faust; Miss Muensterberg is editing Faust, and Dr. Morgan is writing on Heine. Some two hundred volumes are planned to cover every creative German writer, outline the work of every German scientist, furnish guide books to every German philosopher, provide historical studies of every great German statesman, and tell the story of German art and industry.

Haldeman-Julius is already well advanced with similar programs for France, Russia, Spain and Italy. Of French titles he has seventy-five in print, with enough more under way to round out shortly an immediate goal of 150. With France represented by such authors as Anatole France, Balzac, Baudelaire, de Maupassant, Alexandre Dumas, Flaubert, Gautier, Remy de Gourmont, Hugo, Moliere, Montaigne, Maeterlinck, Voltaire, Zola, Jean Jacques Rousseau, George Sand and others, the foundation of his French series is soundly laid. He is not so well along with Russia, but he has thirty titles

Mrs. Marcet Haldeman-Julius, co-author with her husband of the novel, Dust. Mrs. Haldeman-Julius is a niece of Jane Addams.

Alice Haldeman-Julius, seven years old, spends a great deal of time with her beloved pony.

ready and forty coming; twenty Spanish and twenty-five coming; and twenty-two Italian and twenty-five coming. Or classified according to subject, he has 4 titles in philosophy, with 100 under way; history, 40 with 150 coming; science, 45 with 150 coming; drama, 60 with 150 coming; biography, 65 with 150 coming.

"This work will help break down America's cultural isolation," Haldeman-Julius declared. "If we understand the culture of other nations, we won't hate them so much. No one who knows Goethe, Heine and Schiller can keep on calling the Germans Huns. In turn, other nations will learn of our culture through Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau and others. The best peace propaganda in the world is to make the culture of the whole world known to the whole world.

"Everything now conforms to a careful plan, but its growth will proceed infinitely." Going on, telling of his confident dream he says: "It will bring to every man, whatever his place in life, the vast accumulated wisdom of the ages. It will truly educate the masses. It will really bring to this age the intellectual heritage of all past ages. In thus bringing culture to the masses, who can estimate the far-reaching influence of the pocket series in building a higher civilization?

"This is a moment," he will tell you, lighting his pipe, "for making knowledge popular—real, intimate, effective—for restoring culture to its rightful connection with the open air of human nature, in the happy phrase of William James. I believe that what I am doing will reach far — far down into the lives of men, far on into the future. For the Little Blue Books come 'not as single spies, but in battalions'—they are not a scattered host, but an army marching in perfect step as a solid, intelligently directed force."

In obtaining the assistance of his corps of special writers, Haldeman-Julius believes he has blazed the way toward ending many of the evils of the present royalty system to which authors are subject. He pays no royalties. Each book is paid for when completed and accepted, and that ends that. The author, he says, should be a workman, not a speculator. "Let an author unaided put a book on the market," he argues, "for the first 2,000 copies he must lay out from $1,000 to $2,000, without paying for advertising. He may sell a few hundred copies to his friends and never get any further financial return. Likewise the straight royalty system ensures the author very little income. I asked a friend, who is now writing for me on a cash basis, how much he made from a book brought out seven years ago, a very good book, a learned book. He made about $200 the first year and about $40 a year for a few years thereafter — a precarious income at best. To-day he is writing books for me and is more than delighted with the arrangement.

"There is no sound reason why an author should share the publisher's risk in order to gain a remuneration for his labor. Logically the pay is the author's, the risk is the publisher's. That is why I have the friendship of so many authors. If this is not sound, why should Theodore Dreiser sell me three books on a non-royalty basis? There must be something wrong with the royalty system. Why should Max Beerbohm sell me the rights to his one-hundred-page book, The Happy Hypocrite, which sells for $7.50—seven and a half cents a page? For the simple reason that under the royalty system nobody buys it, and he gets nothing."

He believes that in ten years many other publishers will abandon the royalty system and that all but a very few authors will be better off when they sell their work outright. Also the majority of those who flourish most on royalties are far from being lights of literature—quite otherwise.

Through his method of publishing books because they are good and not because they are popular, Haldeman-Julius has given a wide audience to scholars and authors of merit who have hitherto had practically no hearing. There is the case of Charles J. Finger of Arkansas, a retired engineer who specialized in constructing and uprooting railways, an Englishman by birth, a friend of Bernard Shaw, Cunningham Graham, Oscar Wilde, William Morris, and others. Curious to know more about the Little Blue Books, he visited Girard. Haldeman-Julius found Finger a charming person, a scholar, the literary executor of the late William Marion Reedy,

and the editor "for fun" of a little magazine called All's Well. He is to-day among the valued contributors to the Little Blue Book series, writing on English literature, biography and history.

As his own editor-in-chief Haldeman-Julius passes on everything. A constant stream of manuscript is flowing across his desk. A sample day would show such as these: Frank Harris on his relations with Jack London; Dr. Will Durant on Nietzsche; Clement Wood on negro songs; William J. Fielding on Freudian psychology; Sylvestre Dorian on Sarah Bernhardt; Professor Bayard Quincey Morgan on Pictures of Travel; The Intelligence of Invertebrates, by Maynard Shipley; The Sociology of Lester Ward, by Clement Wood; The Poems of Robert Herrick, edited by Bartlett J. Whiting of Harvard; Food and Diet, by Hereward Carrington, Ph.D.; The Agamemnon, by Aeschylus; Poor Richard's Almanac; The Morals of Seneca, edited by Lloyd E. Smith; Modern German Poetry, edited by Ludwig Lewisohn; The Frogs, by Aristhopanes, edited by Alexander Harvey, and a score of others.

Beside his books he is, all the time, editing three periodical publications. The Haldeman-Julius Weekly regained the circulation lost when the political weekly was junked and to-day presents the unique phenomenon of a literary forum of 400,000 readers meeting once a week! Haldeman-Julius presides over it in several columns headed, What the Editor is Thinking About. Here his readers hold forth in tremendous discussions that sometimes rage for weeks. If he gets a letter worth printing, in go the writer's name and address as well. As a result, a disputant will often receive scores of letters from fellow readers, arguing with him or applauding him. The discussions have ranged over such figures and subjects as Tolstoy, Rabelais, Esperanto, Karl Liebknecht, Maurice Hewlitt, Darwinism, Oscar Wilde, Cellini, and so on endlessly. Some of the disputants are little less than brilliant. And let a letter to the forum contain an inaccuracy and it is immediately pounced on by some of this far-flung, invisible army of readers and critics. Sometimes a controversy dies hard. One such, over modern poetry, ran in the magazine for weeks.

Then there is Life and Letters, a monthly publication with a circulation of 100,000 devoted entirely to a single man and his works—a complete, well rounded discussion suggesting all manner of intellectual excursions. If a new author's work is appearing in a Little Blue Book, one issue of the monthly may be given to that man, with the book in question as a working text. Finally there is Know Thyself, a scientific monthly devoted to matters of health, hygiene, psychology and kindred subjects. It has a circulation of 20,000.

His fingers on his readers' literary pulses, Haldeman-Julius gets invaluable suggestions from the thousands who are looking to Girard each week for something to think about, talk about, write about, read about. His publications, supplementing the Little Blue Books, have become a very important by-product. Many of his readers will naturally buy books more expensive than the pocket classics. So Haldeman-Julius sells more standard books in a day than the largest book store in New York City. Frequently he will take the entire unsold portion of an edition off the hands of an Eastern publisher and sell it at reduced prices. Sometimes his plant is the only place in the United States where one can obtain a copy of a book that is out of print.

As the result of all this experience, he has done things in book publishing that were undreamed of five years ago. Take, for example, the matter of speed in issuing a book:

"At 5 o'clock on March 5 we received the manuscript of Rejuvenation — Science's New Fountain of Youth, by William J. Fielding, No. 648 in the Little Blue Books. On the following day Rejuvenation was set, and page proofs were mailed to Mr. Fielding at Newark, N. J. Mr. Fielding received the proofs Saturday, March 8, read the proofs and returned them to Girard, where they arrived on March 11. On March 12 the O. K.'ed forms were sent to the foundry, where plates were made. The plates were received on March 18, and were immediately placed on a press. Within 20 minutes the book was beginning to go through our bindery and into our shipping department and warehouse. That means 12 days from the receipt of

the manuscript to the completion of the book, which included about five days' delay owing to the time it took for the proofs to get to the author and back again.

"On Wednesday night, March 12, we sent to the linotypers the manuscript of a new book, entitled K K K—The Kreed of the Klansman, No. 650 in the Little Blue Books. We received proofs on Friday morning, March 14, and they were read at once. The plates were received on March 18 and went to press immediately. That means it took only six days to perform every process of manufacture from setting the type to placing the finished book in stock. No special consideration was given these books. They were going through the regular routine. Here is added evidence why the Haldeman-Julius plant is able to produce books to retail at 5 cents per copy. In the matter of reprints, where we already have the plates in our vault and merely wish to issue another edition, we find that a book that is out of print can be reprinted and placed in stock in only 20 minutes."

Haldeman-Julius has taken newspaper methods into book publishing, constantly fighting time with new inventions. Everything in his plant is as nearly automatic as human ingenuity can make it. Whole batteries of Kellys work away like automatons. A giant Miehle Perfector press, as yet hardly known in this country, prints four complete books at one impression—both sides of the paper. Covers come off the press twenty at a time, slit ready for binding. The binding machine drops out two complete books a second, minus covers only. Nearby are the stitchers, where girls drop blue covers on a procession of books moving steadily toward the cutter. The operation is completed when the two books are jointly trimmed and with a final slash are cut into their separate selves—The Trial and Death of Socrates on one end, let us say, and Emerson's Essays on the other. The press can change from one book to another in twenty minutes.

There is no problem of make-ready, so costly and time-consuming in the average publishing plant. The plates come ganged in fours. These fit on patent bases. The form is not unlocked or taken from the press. The old plates are unscrewed and the new ones put on, and the press is running again. Instead of an initial edition of 2,000 books, say, Haldeman-Julius prints at least 30,000. Through a perpetual inventory he always has enough books on hand to handle an order for 1,000,000 books, evenly divided, without being short a single book.

With mass production and merchandising through the mail well solved, he is turning to other problems of distribution. That in the cities he considers solved through the Little Blue Book Stores that began springing up in 1923. At this writing there are fourteen of these in the large cities: in New York City, Brooklyn, Cincinnati, Detroit, Los Angeles, Boston, Montreal, Birmingham, Ala., Atlantic City, Atlanta, Ga., Milwaukee, Buffalo, San Francisco and Portland, Ore. Their total sales are fantastic. The Cincinnati store ordered $40,000 worth of books from him in three months—more than a million and a quarter. The Detroit store sold 300,000 books in two weeks. The Los Angeles store started with 275,000 books—the largest order in the history of book publishing. The first New York store, at 51st and Broadway, near the Capitol Theatre, sold 166,000 in three days and telegraphed for a quarter of a million more. Now Haldeman-Julius is turning to the rural field, offering exclusive agency contracts for whole counties. Within a week after he made this offer he had signed up three counties. He is threatening—and not jokingly—to imitate the 2,000 Raleigh Medicine wagons and put out book stores on wheels to cover the country—motor caravans taking the classics to the literary deserts of the country, leaving cultural oases in their wake!

In his small office on the ground floor of his two-story plant, his desk is piled with manuscript, books, correspondence. Through the open door comes the steady churning of the Miehle Perfector, printing four complete books per turn. That clatter you hear is the folder, putting up two complete books a second. That grind and thud is the cutter, separating another pair of literary twins. An express truck rattles by the window loaded with thousands of Little Blue Books bound for the train. His private secretary brings in a proof to O. K. Haldeman-

Julius pulls out a card index and checks up—578 complete books in print to date, and 90 more scheduled for immediate publication. On an average, twelve new books are added each week. Haldeman-Julius envisages the steady growth of the Little Blue Book series—a dramatic vision of a thousand titles, five thousand titles, ten thousand titles. Who can tell what the end will be, who can set a limit to the possibilities of this idea?

In talking of his work, he puts emphasis on its fluent nature; it is not fixed within any bounds, but is a thing of constant expansion and progression. "When I began to issue the Little Blue Books," he said, "people asked how far I intended to go. They found it hard to conceive of a project without definite limits. A building was always so many stories high, a road so many miles long, and the Little Blue Books, by analogy, must surely be limited in number. Now that the series is well past the six hundred mark, people realize that they do not represent a work of to-day only and of a certain number of titles, but a work of the future and of endless possibilities. The work is as boundless as the need for it—as boundless as culture itself.

"For culture is a spiritual reaction, not merely years of reading. The cultured man is always reading. There is always a new door to open. But he must open the right one, and the guide must be loyal. I made my mistakes, you can be sure. At one time I thought it wise to include in my series some of the so-called 'self-improvement' books. I have killed them all off, seventy of them, representing a small fortune. For I saw what a vicious thing it was for me to start a young reader on Plato, for example, teach him to trust my judgment, and then have him in good faith accept from me The Science of Developing A Pleasing Personality, or the like. You can't at the same time teach a man to be a commercial success and a spiritual success. Therefore I now put no emphasis whatever in my series on political, social or material success. I do not emphasize in biography the great generals, the Napoleons, the captains of industry, but the great poets, scientists, philosophers, dramatists. Who knows to-day who was the greatest profiteer while Aristophanes was holding his thousands? Who cares who made a fortune out of supplying Caesar's army with helmets and chariot wheels? What value a hundred years from now is the story of how an office boy rose to be president of the greatest commercial success in his field? I want to let people know who is thinking, who is writing good plays, composing great symphonies, who is creating beauty. For there is no time limit on culture."

"When will you publish full sized books—novels, for example—in the Little Blue Book series?" he was asked.

"I have already begun," he replied. "Upton Sinclair's The Millenium, in three volumes, for fifteen cents, is already available. I shall print The Jungle for thirty cents, and his Captain of Industry, out of print now for twenty years; also The Red Lily and The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard, by Anatole France, something by Zola, de Maupassant, and many others. I am bringing out Le Cid, the great Spanish epic, in two volumes for ten cents. And that illustrates what can be done with the Little Blue Books. I found a good translation of Le Cid had been printed in this country by the Hispanic Society in a limited edition for $6. You can imagine how many people could buy it. It is a great literary document and a work of art that the American reading public has a right to know. I wrote the Hispanic Society saying frankly that if it wished to make money out of its translation, we could not do business; but that if it were genuinely interested in making the American public acquainted with true Spanish culture, I should be glad to include this translation in my series. The Society was delighted, agreed to let me reprint the book, and has given me wonderful co-operation.

"Consider what that means. High publishing costs play into the hands of ignorance and bigotry. Take H. G. Wells' Outline of History, for example, first published at $10, then at $5—doubtless it can be had even cheaper now. Let us assume that 500,000 persons bought it. I could publish it in its original length in 16 volumes for 80 cents. I could probably sell 5,000,000 copies without difficulty. High book prices keep culture from the public. Some day authors will rebel against the practice that restricts their audiences.

"There is another very wonderful

Alice and Henry with their dogs and their ponies. The rat-terrier, Ricky, looking for a flea, proved to be a greater attraction even than the camera

Henry Haldeman-Julius, four and a half years old, is a horseman, though his feet cannot reach the stirrups.

feature of the Little Blue Books—they represent a free publishing press. They are absolutely independent of the influence of advertising. At first I printed advertisements of my own books on the covers of the Little Blue Books. That has stopped. For one cover alone I have refused a fortune from a correspondence school which saw in my list of readers a vast market for its product. With a circulation of 120,000 a day, the back cover alone of the Little Blue Books is worth $50,000 a year in advertising. If I started that, where could I stop?

"Just as the Little Blue Books stand for a press free from advertising influence, so do they stand for freedom of speech and thought. There is literally no subject I will not give a hearing. I have nothing to be afraid of. I have no political, social or business axe to grind, no special cause to plead, no one standpoint to emphasize. Why shouldn't every conceivable subject be discussed? Safety lies in more light. I am free to give Mr. Hughes a hearing on the Monroe doctrine, and Emma Goldman on anarchism. I am publishing the Essence of Catholicism, an authoritative work passed upon by a priest of the Catholic Church. I am also publishing works on Darwinism, Socialism and the Ku Klux Klan. Let us print the truth as well as the best minds can see and present it. I have no taboos, no publishers' inhibitions. With more than 600 volumes on every conceivable subject in print, I have earned the right to publish so-called sex books. That does not mean pornography, but books passed upon by such men as Dr. Morris Fishbein, associate editor of the Journal of the American Medical Association. Think of it—if I want to I shall publish a book on syphilis or homosexuality. I am free!

"I have spoken frequently of 'a University in Print.' The truth is that the average young person to-day can never go to college. There is a great annual educational deficit, so to speak, that only outside reading can make up for. In 1920 the commercial and business schools of the country had 261,269 students enrolled, while only 521,754 students were attending colleges and universities. Roughly speaking, therefore, one person in one hundred is to-day receiving any formal education above the grammar grades. I will not enter into the question of whether the average college graduate to-day really gets an education: many of us doubt it. The point is that with the invention of the printing press the university, to which young men in the medieval ages flocked to hear the sages, has gradually ceased to be the custodian of education and the fountain of learning. To-day the real university is the printing press. It alone can anywhere near satisfy the wide hunger for good books and real learning.

"The other day I got this letter from a farmer boy which touched me profoundly. I printed it in full in the Weekly; listen:

" 'How about a farm boy laying in a word now and then? Should farm boys do nothing, day in and day out, but tend horses, cows and sheep? Very many people here think so, but not so with me, I'm different. All my fellows around here are not interested in that which interests me. My great "hobby" is reading.

" 'There is really lots of time for it during winter, at least there should be. Every farmer has time to read during winter evenings. If he says he hasn't, why, he doesn't care to read. I have often told my friends about reading I had done, and how interesting it was, and they simply said they would rather lie down and sleep. They're mostly all that way around here, but I am very different, as I have said.

" 'Had you walked across one of my father's fields last spring, during seeding time, you would have seen in one corner a horse and harrow, near which sat a young man of eighteen, reading a small book while the horse rested. It was I that sat there, and the book I read was a Little Blue Book, The Stoic Philosophy. I carried this in my pocket while harrowing, and took it out to read whenever the horse needed a rest. Not only that day, but all summer I carried one or other of the Little Blue Books in my pants pocket. Sawing wood at the neighbors', I read a Little Blue Book while the tractor bucked, or when the saw shaft got a hot box. I didn't want to stand in the other people's way, so I sat down to read. So there's no excuse for not reading, not even for a farmer.

" 'I certainly like your Weekly. It

has given me much information on what to read and why. If there are any readers of the Weekly who think a farm boy needs no culture, tell them how I feel about it. I want literature, and Girard, Kansas, is where I get it. I am only a farm boy, working with my father on a 140-acre farm.'"

There again, just as in the smoking-car, you see the University in Print functioning.

Much of this talk quoted from Mr. Haldeman-Julius was heard in his home out on "the edge of town." The edge of Girard does not take you far from the center and the printing plant, but a farm stretches away on the other side, and horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, ducks, gees, chickens, guinea hens help to make it a real farm that must take some looking-after; while a home where comfort is lifted to the plane of luxury, and a wife, who is also the closest of literary collaborators, and three small children make their pulls on husband and father and artist. Yet he does not seem torn as between conflicting claims, but full of the serene, active satisfaction you can read in these portraits, as of a young man who is finally more human than literary and who finds life very good. Think of his even having the time and taste to be a real and devoted chess player!

He is like a man of the Renaissance for versatility in power, and more than anything else his essays, stories and novel upset modern notions about specialization. Because they are good. They are born right; conceived and born by the same inward processes that have created all literature; as clean as the best of that mechanical "imitation art" which Tolstoy named so well. So you find plenty of people who know Mr. and Mrs. Haldeman-Julius, contributors to the Atlantic Monthly and authors of the able and memorable novel, Dust; who know too the Little Blue Books, but who have never dreamed of identifying the author with the publisher. Haldeman-Julius is certainly a most unusual name, but to think of one man in the two characters was to dislocate their mental underpinning and they did not do it.

Mr. and Mrs. Haldeman-Julius are artists of parts and it is to be hoped that the publishing business will never overlay and kill their artistic collaboration. It has enriched our literature and they are in a position of peculiar artistic freedom; they have a publisher who will let them do what they want to! They can keep on widening our literary traditions—which the usual publisher is driven to commercialize—as he does, for instance, in the volume he calls The Color of Life. We go to foreigners for such pictures and characterizations independent of strict story form, but this American's publisher leaves him as free as Checkov or de Maupassant to say his say, whether it has a plot or not.

So out in Girard, Kansas, is flowering a new chance for a rich, grown-up American literature. It is the old story; democracy has brought us down from the best days of the Concord school, but the cure for the evils of democracy is always more democracy.

A KING'S TOMB

There in the desert sand his splendid toys
Are lifted up for alien eyes to see.
For all his gaudy pomp and kingly noise,
A muffled tapping from the two or three
Wise workmen groping in the sultry tomb
Where pictured walls shut in the golden bed,
And ivory and gems in dusty bloom
Blink patiently around the royal dead.

The blazing sun drops and the lifting sand
Whispers of night. The muleteers tinkle home.
The stars spread out their milky silver band.
A jackal rises like a desert gnome
Laughs harsh and shrill, and waits, a lonely thing,
Beside the lonely chamber of a king

Rose Henderson

STUBBY

By "SAPPER"

Illustrated by Harold Lund

"IT'S not for want of asking," sighed Mrs. Tremayne. "If he's proposed once he must have done it half a dozen times. Mona simply will not give him a definite answer."

"I gather," murmured the Soldier, "that you would like the answer when it does come to be in the affirmative."

"Naturally," said our hostess. "Ever since they were children it has been our wish and his people's, too. An understood thing. It's so eminently suitable. The properties adjoin; Desmond is an only child, and so is Mona. The two families are connected in a hundred ways by ties of sentiment and place and everything else. Desmond is standing for this constituency next election, and my old Tom is a leading light in the Conservative association here. Besides—look at them. Have you ever seen a better looking pair?"

And making due allowance for maternal pride one could but agree: they were a magnificent pair. Mona—well, of

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"Are you aware, sir," said Stubby, "that you ran over my dog—and then failed to stop?"

course, on the subject of Mona Tremayne even I was partially dotty. At the advanced age of sixty, with senile decay coming on apace, I had the greatest difficulty in refraining from proposing to her myself. In fact, only the certainty of her becoming hysterical with laughter restrained me. So I contented myself with being called Uncle Dick—uncle out of deference only to my gray and scanty hairs—and having the top of my head kissed. But what a darling she is——

And I admit that young Brooke was almost worthy of her. Clever, wealthy, a wonderful athlete, and very good-looking—he was essentially what would be described as an excellent match. A little inclined perhaps to be sarcastic; a little too intolerant of fools perhaps—but withal one of the best. At least so I thought.

Our hostess left us, and the Soldier relit his pipe.

"These settled things, old Dick, have a way of not coming off."

"My dear Bill," I answered, "don't forget we're hopelessly old-fashioned. As far as I can make out if a man proposes to a girl to-day he just says, 'What about it,' and she says, 'Not a hope.' Then they push off to a night club and come home with the milk."

"Perhaps," he said. "But that doesn't apply to Miss Mona." He was staring thoughtfully across the lawn. "She's a thoroughbred—that girl."

"So, I think, is young Brooke," I replied.

He didn't speak for a while, and then he said something which surprised me.

"I wonder," he remarked. "I wonder. First-class in the show ring, I admit; a prize winner every time. But it's a funny thing, Dick, how often one finds a yellow streak in that type when it comes to the test."

He broke off suddenly. Mona was standing behind us.

"You two lazy men have got to come and play tennis," she said smiling. But there was a thoughtful look in her eyes, and I couldn't help wondering if she'd heard.

Certainly it was an idea that would never have occurred to me. In common with a good many other people I had always looked on Brooke as just about as perfect a specimen of young manhood as it was possible to find. But Bill Saunders was a man of understanding—used to men and the ways of men, and as a judge of character—male characters at any rate—I have yet to meet his superior. And after we'd finished our tennis he reverted to the subject. We were strolling back to the house together, with Mona and young Brooke some way behind.

"I hope the little girl didn't hear what I said about the yellow streak," he remarked. "But I'm open to a small bet of an even shilling that it's there. Not that, in all probability, the fact will ever come out, so your shilling is safe."

"But what makes you think so, Bill?" I demanded.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear old man," he said, "in the course of my long and disreputable career I've run across a good many fellows. And there have been times when an accurate appreciation of character has been of the greatest value to me. And I tell you now that if I knew I was going to find myself in a really tight corner I'd sooner have that sandy-haired boy with the snub nose and the freckles by my side than young Brooke."

"What—Stubby!" I laughed incredulously. "Dear old Stubby! Though I agree that he's an awfully nice boy. But, Bill, no one could take Stubby seriously." And Bill Saunders smiled and said nothing.

It was at school that he got his nickname, and when you met him you realized why. His real name was Jack Stretton, but so universal was the use of the other that frequently a house-party broke up with half the guests in ignorance of what that real name was. Complete strangers called him Stubby, and Stubby grinned all over his freckled face and loved it.

His age was twenty-seven, and he would not have won a prize at a beauty show. Unless, maybe, it had been a prize for eyes only. Cover up the rest of Stubby's face, cover up his short sandy hair, and one stood almost tongue-tied at the beauty of those great brown eyes of his. I've tried it and I know. Not that anybody had ever mentioned the fact to him. He would have been reduced to a condition of impotent bashfulness and rage, which would have rendered him speechless. He would probably, in fact, have regarded it as a deadly insult. And yet those brown eyes of his are the most beautiful things I have ever seen in the world.

Like a spaniel's—just full of confidence and trust, and love and—what is lacking in a dog—a wonderful glint of humor. That the humor was generally directed against himself was beside the point; perhaps even, it increased the charm.

For Stubby was one of those dear fellows who invariably did the wrong thing. If in any conversation there was a chance of some one putting his foot into it, the only safe thing to do, if Stubby was present, was to muzzle him. Otherwise he would be that some one with unfailing regularity. And yet nobody could ever be angry with him for long.

He would seize a lull in the conversation to discuss the subject of wigs with some aged woman in an obvious brown toupé, and when he was frowned into silence by his hostess would tactfully extricate himself by saying to the outraged female that he never realized it wasn't her own hair. So well made, don't you know. By Jove! yes—rather. Corking fit. Have some muffin, won't you?

Another of his little pecularities was his usefulness. He was a sort of universal fag.

"Stubby, darling—will you be an

angel and trot back to the house. I've left my parasol in the hall."

And Stubby would trot back half a mile or so and return beaming with a large golfing umbrella.

At games or anything in the sport line he was probably the world's worst rabbit. When Stubby shot, strong men in his vicinity lay prostrate on the ground; when Stubby rode—well, I will not labor the point. He seemed to adopt the sentiment towards his saddle of the gentleman from the backwoods towards a spittoon:

"If you don't take that durned thing away I'll spit in it."

Similarly Stubby:

"If you don't take that durned saddle away I'll sit in it."

But it was at games that his really staggering ineptitude was most apparent. At cricket if the batsman hit a catch in his direction he would merely put the wicket in preparation for the next ball. And it is on record that on the one known occasion when he held a catch the umpires conferred together before giving the batsman out, in order to be certain that lunch had not been too much for their eyesight.

It was the same at tennis and golf. He was hopeless—incredibly, unbelievably hopeless. And yet withal he was a sportsman in the truest sense of the word. For the test of true sportsmanship is not the ability with which a thing is done, but the spirit in which it is done. And Stubby's spirit was pure gold clean through.

But as I said to Bill Saunders no one took him seriously. He was—and always would be—just Stubby. If any other man had shown such obvious adoration for Mona, Brooke might reasonably have felt uneasy. But with Stubby it didn't matter. He knew how things stood; he knew that it was a sort of tacitly accepted matter that in the fulness of time Mona would marry Brooke — in fact we all assumed it. And that in itself was sufficient to prevent him dreaming of anything serious — for Stubby was a loyal soul.

With that she left the room very quickly.

Just as he adored Mona, so in a different way did he worship Brooke. It was almost pathetic—his admiration for this man who did everything so supremely well; admiration untarnished by the slightest trace of jealousy. Did Brooke do something good, playing cricket for the county, it was Stubby who missed no ball in the telling of it; did Brooke shoot well it was Stubby who faithfully recorded every right and left. And having done so he would then with great

solemnity propose to Mona across the dinner table.

"Some day, Stubby darling, I shall accept you," said Mona one evening. "Are you aware that that is the forty-ninth time?"

"Fiftieth," said Stubby promptly. "You've forgotten the one at breakfast last Tuesday week."

Which was fairly indicative of the state of affairs when Bill Saunders made his shilling bet with me.

I can't say that I thought much more about it; as he said, it was very improbable that any one would ever discover the fact even if he was right.

And then there occurred the Rosenthal incident.

We were having tea out of doors—the Tremaynes, Bill Saunders and I—when the Rosenthals arrived. We knew them both very slightly and they were of the type which causes one to barricade oneself in the most inaccessible attic and refuse to move. But escape was impossible and with a sort of frozen calm we watched them descend from their car. The man had been something in the City, and was entitled on sight to a residence in the charming old-world town of Jerusalem.

They were newcomers and late-goers; and until that afternoon I never realized the true descriptiveness of the phrase "to descend on people." They descended on us; they didn't just cross the lawn and sit down—they descended. And as they descended from one quarter Stubby ascended from another.

He was in his dirtiest pair of old gray flannel trousers, and in his arms he carried a terrier. It was moaning feebly and it seemed a queer sort of shape, but it still had enough strength in its poor little broken body to lick his hand. They met at the tea-table and suddenly I heard Mona give a little gasp. And she was not looking at the dog—she was looking at Stubby. For there was that in his eyes which I had never seen before—blind, black rage.

"Are you aware, sir," he said, "that you ran over my dog one hundred yards down the road, and then failed to stop when I shouted to you, though I saw you look round?"

It was an awkward moment, but worse was to come. As I have said Stubby was in his oldest clothes and the mistake was perhaps excusable. To the gentleman who had been something in the City there seemed only one solution. It was most annoying; he could hear his wife breathing heavily at such an unfortunate contretemps. Just as they were calling on one of the leaders of The County Set, and she with her best pearls on. And this common young man—dreadful——

"There, there, my man," he remarked suavely. "How very unfortunate. Here's a fiver for you to—er—buy another dog with."

And once again Mona gave a little gasp.

"You splay-faced swab," said Stubby slowly and very distinctly. "You horrible parody of a human being. You cross between a bucket shop proprietor and an Italian waiter—how dare you offer me money? If I had gloves on, you perspiring excrescence, I would make you eat your fiver. Go away!"—he laid the dog gently in Mona's lap—"go away from here and never let me see you again, you—you outrage on decency. If I had a tank I'd passage it backwards and forwards over your beastly person and howl with joy as you squashed."

"Good gracious! my dear—he's mad!"

With agitation written large on their faces the callers were backing towards their car with Stubby following them step by step. Surely Mrs. Tremayne would do something; it was monstrous that they should be insulted by a common young man merely because of a wretched dog, monstrous. And yet Mr. Tremayne seemed more interested in the little brute than in them.

"I am not mad," continued Stubby still driving them in front of him. "Far from it. And if you'd had the common decency—it's about the only common attribute you lack—to stop when you ran over my dog, I wouldn't have minded so much."

"I'll summon you for assault and battery," howled the man.

He and his wife, white and shaking with rage, were in the car by now.

"I wish you would," said Stubby. "That would finally finish your chance of getting to know any one decent. This address will find me for the next fortnight."

The words died away on the City gentleman's lips; this terrible young man was a member of the house-party.

"Home," he snarled to the chauffeur. Heavens! how he'd take it out of the fool later for not being more careful in his driving.

"Stubby, dear!" said Mrs. Tremayne as he joined us after watching the car out of sight. "Weren't you just a little——"

"I'm sorry," said Stubby quietly. "I couldn't help it. Oh! Look at little Dick."

He was bending over Mona, and suddenly she looked up at him. Something wet had splashed on her hand, and she was a girl of great understanding.

"Let's take him to the stables, Stubby, and see if we can do anything."

They went off together, but there was nothing to be done. Dick would kill no more rats and they buried him that evening in a special corner of the garden. They didn't see me; they were too engrossed in what they were doing. And when it was all over they stood there for a moment or two looking down at the grave. It was then it happened. She took Stubby in her arms and kissed him on the lips.

"Stubby dear," she said. "I just loved you at tea to-day."

She was gone, leaving Stubby staring after her foolishly. He was swaying a little—like a man partially dazed. And as he passed me a few moments later, completely unconscious of my presence, he was muttering to himself.

"Don't be a fool, you ass; don't be a fool."

But there was a look on his face that hurt and for the first time in my life I felt annoyed with Mona. I knew she'd meant it kindly, but it wasn't quite fair to the boy. And I made up my mind, if I got an opportunity, to mention it to her.

I found Bill Saunders on the lawn and he grinned gently as he saw me.

"A refreshing flow of language," he remarked. "But I fear it's going to be a little awkward. I gather the Hebraic gentleman is somewhat of a power politically."

"I didn't know Stubby had it in him," I said.

And once again Bill smiled and said nothing.

But it was awkward all right and the awkwardness started at dinner.

Desmond had come over and it soon became obvious that he was annoyed.

"I say, Stubby," he began, almost as soon as we sat down, "what is this I hear from Jackson?" Jackson was the lodge-keeper. "He spun me some interminable yarn about your having insulted that fellow Rosenthal this afternoon."

For a moment no one spoke; by tacit consent the subject had not been alluded to again.

"He killed Dick," said Stubby. "Ran over him with his beastly motor car. Never even stopped, and then offered me a fiver."

Desmond frowned irritably.

"Well I don't suppose he ran over the dog on purpose. And if you were in your usual rig I don't wonder that he offered you money."

"But, great Scott, old man," cried Stubby, "He's the most unredeemable swine, so what does it matter?"

"It matters this," answered the other. "Your little entertainment this afternoon has in all probability cost me five or six hundred votes. I know the fellow is a swine—but he's got works in Murchester. And he's got a lot of interests in Murchester. And in this constituency the way the Murchester vote goes is very important."

"My dear old man, I *am* sorry." Stubby was genuinely distressed. "That aspect of the case simply never dawned on me. But surely the fact that I slanged the bounder won't affect you."

"Oh! Stubby—don't be such an ass," Desmond Brooke laughed, but his underlying irritation was still obvious. "Everybody round here knows that you and I are friends. Apart from that the thing was done in this house, and Mr. Tremayne is the head of our association."

He laughed again and pushed away his plate.

"Doesn't matter, old man, don't worry. But next time choose some one less important to give tongue to."

"Would it do any good if I went and apologised," said Stubby. "I can't say that I want to, but——"

"If you do," broke in Mona calmly, "I'll never speak to you again. So that's that. Now let's talk of something else."

That was that all right, but as a conversational effort it did not add to the harmony of the evening. Brooke flushed angrily, and looked sullen. Stubby glanced anxiously from one god to the other. And things did not improve after dinner. In the billiard room Desmond Brooke was studiously polite to Mona in such a marked fashion as to make it obvious. And after a while Mona laid down her cue.

"If you're trying to pick a quarrel with me, Desmond," she remarked, "say so straight out. I dislike people beating about the bush."

Only Stubby and I were there, and Desmond returned his own cue to the rack.

"Perhaps it would be as well if we could have a little private talk," he said. "I don't think there is any one in the gunroom."

He held the door open for her, and Stubby with misery in his eyes watched them disappear.

"What an ass I am," he muttered. "It's all my silly fault. They'll have a row now."

And I, with the memory of what I had seen in the garden fresh in my mind, marvelled that so much loyalty could exist in a human being.

There was no doubt about the row. Five minutes later the door was flung open and Desmond, his face black as thunder, appeared.

"I say, old man." Stubby started forward.

"Go to blazes," snarled the other. And then he paused ominously. "Or, rather, since you seem to be the pattern of all the virtues, go to Mona."

With that he left the billiard room and a little later I heard the front door slam. Undoubtedly a new experience for Master Desmond, and a very salutary one.

Shortly after he had gone Mona came in from the gunroom. Her color was a little higher, but otherwise there was no sign that anything had occurred.

"We might play three hundred, don't you think," she said. "All against all."

"I say, Mona—what an awful box up," cried Stubby.

"Don't be an ass, Stubby dear," she said quietly and picked up her cue.

No more was said and it wasn't until just before we went to bed that I got a word with her alone. I felt I just had to—for Stubby's sake.

"Dear child," I said, "you've had a bit of a row with Desmond, I know. And though I'm old and venerable and suffering from senile decay, I wonder if you'd let me say one thing to you?"

"Anything you like, Uncle Dick," she answered gently.

"Well—it's this. The row will blow over in a day or two, but until it does, of your mercy be careful with Stubby."

"What *do* you mean?" she said, with a puzzled look on her face.

"In a way he's the cause of the row, isn't he—I mean what he did? Well, don't be too kind to him just because you're angry with Desmond. It would mean nothing to you—I was in the garden to-day when you buried Dick, and I saw you kiss him, and that meant nothing to you. But, my dear, don't forget how he adores you, and I don't want him to suffer."

"You darling," she said. "You darling. Nor do I."

And with that she left the room very quickly.

Strange how utterly blind people are at times. I suppose it is that one gets a preconceived idea in one's head and there isn't room for anything else. Certainly during the next two months things went on as usual. Desmond came and went and Stubby came and went whilst I emulated the celebrated brook. Desmond was working full time in the constituency; a Very Great Man had come to stay for the week-end and had given as his Very Great and Considered Opinion that there was a big future in front of young Brooke.

"He has brains, money, charm and tact," he remarked, "and with those four assets a man can get anywhere."

And Stubby who heard him beamed all over his ugly face and said, "Top-hole. Good old Desmond."

It seemed certain that with or without the Murchester vote he would get into Parliament at the next election. In fact the Rosenthal incident was forgotten.

On the advice of Mr. Tremayne, Stubby had written him a short note regretting that in the heat of the moment he might have expressed himself a little strongly, and had received a curt line of

acknowledgment. And there it had ended. In fact everything seemed just as it was before it happened—except for one thing. I noticed it in a lot of little ways—Brooke's behavior to Stubby, but it came to a head at a big tennis tournament given by the Tremaynes. They had four courts and it was a three-day show, with one or two star performers specially invited. And in it a miracle occurred. Stubby, who received forty every game, much helped by two walk-overs, had reached the finals in the handicap singles. And Desmond Brooke was the other finalist.

The result, of course, was a foregone conclusion. Stubby had no more chance—even with his handicap—of beating Brooke than he would have had of beating Tilden. But he was so keen and he was so excited. To reach the final of anything was so inconceivably beyond his wildest dream that he was almost incoherent.

It was then it happened. She took Stubby in her arms and kissed him on the lips.

The court was crowded with spectators to see the prospective new member, and—well, dash it all—I know Brooke had the game in his pocket, but even so, he might surely have made some small effort to appear interested. Not a bit of it; he seemed to go out of his way to make Stubby look a fool. And he succeeded.

In a story, I suppose, Stubby would have won. He didn't. I don't think he got a game. With the sweat dripping off his face he rushed wildly backwards and forwards, while Brooke—who hadn't troubled to take off his sweater—Brooke simply played with him.

And after a while people began to laugh and Brooke began to smile. In fact I thought I was the only person looking on who wasn't laughing till I turned round and found Mona behind me. And she wasn't laughing either. She didn't say anything though she saw me right enough. But when it was over and Brooke was surrounded by a bevy of admiring people, she went across to Stubby—who was mopping his face in a corner by himself. And by chance I glanced at Brooke and caught the look on his face as he saw them. It was gone in a moment, but it was the same as it had worn when he snarled at Stubby in the billiard room on the night of the Rosenthal incident.

It was incredible to think that Brooke was jealous of Stubby, and yet what other solution was there? As I say the tennis tournament was only the culmination of a whole series of similar things, and for the first time I began to wonder whether the universal assumption with regard to the matrimonial stakes was correct. And I wondered even more ten minutes later. I went over to one of the marquees to get a whiskey and soda and I heard voices from the other side of a big palm. It was impossible to avoid listening and, as I say, I wondered even more.

"Look here, Stubby,"—it was Brooke speaking—"I don't want to be unpleasant. But remember in future that Mona is to all intents engaged to me. I don't want you making her conspicuous."

"But, good Lord, old man," cried Stubby aghast, "I wouldn't do such a thing for the world."

"Well be a little more discreet in future, then," said Brooke as he left.

The whole accusation was rankly unfair, even if Brooke had been actually engaged to the girl. As he wasn't it was grossly impertinent. But Stubby took it to heart badly. And during the next fortnight I often caught Mona looking at him with a puzzled frown. He used to flee from her presence, as if she had an infectious disease.

"Look here, Stubby," she said to him one day, "what on earth is the matter? Why are you avoiding me like the pest."

He flushed all over his face and began stammering something or other.

"No excuses," she remarked. "I want the truth."

She listened in silence and when he had finished there was an ominous look in her eyes.

"Thank you, Stubby," she said quietly. "I understand. I'm driving over to Murchester to fetch Desmond."

"You won't say anything to the old boy," said Stubby greatly agitated.

She looked at him with a faint smile.

"There are times, Stubby, when I could kiss you, and there are times when I could smack you. I'm not certain which this is."

With that she was gone and we watched her drive away from the door behind a spanking great bay horse. The Tremaynes had a car, but they stuck to the old-fashioned way, for short distances.

"I'm always putting my foot in it," said Stubby miserably. "Now they'll have another row."

"Look here, young fellow," I said, "if you take my advice you'll think a little less of Desmond and a little more of yourself. Brooke is quite capable of taking care of himself."

It was two hours later that a white-faced groom brought the dog-cart back alone. The bay was lathered in sweat. We ran out to see what had happened.

"Where's Miss Mona?" cried her father in an agony.

"Miss Mona's all right, sir," cried the man, "it's Mr. Stretton. For heaven's sake get a doctor. Tim got frightened by a traction engine coming out o' Murchester and bolted for two miles. I couldn't stop him and no more could Miss Mona. Mr. Brooke fell out; I seed him running after us. And we was coming to Bury Hill. Suddenly we sees Mr. Stretton awalking along the road in front. He looks round and sees us, and he makes a dive at Tim's 'ead. He 'ung on, sir—and he was dragged something cruel. But 'e stopped Tim just at the top of the 'ill. And then—well the wheel went over 'im, sir—just at the end. I've left 'im there, sir—with Miss Mona. She told me to come on and send a doctor."

Stubby was unconscious when we got there, lying on the grass beside the road with his head in Mona's lap.

"Where's the doctor?" she cried.

"Coming, my darling," said her father. "Are you all right?"

"I'm not even touched," she answered. And then her voice broke. "But I'm afraid Stubby is done for. And it's all my fault."

At that moment he opened his eyes.

"Hullo!" he said feebly. Then he seemed to remember. "Are you all right, Mona? Not hurt?"

"Not a bit, Stubby dear, thanks to you." And before us all she bent down and kissed him on the mouth.

For a moment a wonderful look came into his eyes; then his mind began to wander.

"All right, old man," he muttered. "Of course I won't make her conspicuous. As if I could—with such a face."

He stirred restlessly; only the touch of Mona's hand on his forehead seemed to soothe him. And always his words were of the girl, till the tears were pouring down her face unchecked, and her father cursed childishly at the non-arrival of the doctor.

But he came at last and made his examination. And when he had finished his face was grave.

"I don't know," he said quietly. "I can't say for certain. But we must get him to your house in an ambulance at once. Then I can make a closer overhaul."

The chauffeur was sent post haste to Murchester, while we waited there beside the road. And the doctor told me what he feared—a broken back.

Poor old Stubby! Lying there, muttering out the secrets of his heart—secrets he fondly imagined we'd none of us

guessed! And once the girl whispered pitifully—she didn't know I was close behind her—"You must pull through, old man—you must, for my sake."

And Stubby only muttered on.

But the ambulance arrived at last and we got him back to the house. It was while the Doctor was making his detailed examination that Mona joined me in the garden. And there was a look in her eyes which hurt.

"Dear girl," I said, "don't take it so much to heart. After all he just did what one would have expected Stubby to do. It's lucky Desmond wasn't hurt when he fell out. By the way, I wonder where he is."

"Fell out, Uncle Dick," she said slowly. "He didn't fall out. When Tim bolted—he jumped. You look amazed," she continued. "I don't wonder. Even now though I saw it with my own eyes it seems incredible.

"Do you remember months ago talking to General Saunders on the lawn? He said something about Desmond having a yellow streak in him. He didn't mean me to hear—but I did. It didn't make much impression on me at the time; after all it was only a guess on his part, and I thought that whatever other faults Desmond had in his character cowardice was not one of them. I knew he was intensely selfish; I knew he was mean—I don't allude to money matters. You can't grow up with some one and not spot things like that. I knew he was intensely jealous—and jealous in the worst way. Not jealous because he's in love with a person; but jealous because he's in love with his own position. And if I knew it before, I've known it doubly since that row between Stubby and the Rosenthals. He was furious with me for taking Stubby's side, and he's revenged himself—or tried to—on Stubby since."

She paused and stared across the park.

"But cowardice—I didn't think that." She turned and faced me squarely. "Uncle Dick—I said it was all my fault. It is. There was a moment this afternoon, just as Tim was getting out of hand, when I could have controlled him. I know it. And some devil in me prompted me to look at Desmond's face. And I saw in it stark fear. It staggered me. I remembered General Saunders' remark and I didn't pull Tim up. Nothing seemed to matter except to see what Desmond would do. And he jumped. The groom didn't see—Tim had got away properly—and he was leaning over on my other side hauling on the reins. But I saw. He stood up swaying—and then he jumped. And just before he jumped he looked at me. He knows I know."

"Good heavens!" I muttered, "it seems impossible."

"As if it mattered what he did," she went on. "Stubby is all that counts—and oh!—won't that doctor ever come? It's my fault—don't you see?—all my fault." She was clutching my arm. "If I'd stopped Tim this would never have happened."

And then suddenly she grew very still; her father was coming across the lawn towards us.

"It's all right, dear," he cried. "Three ribs, a collar bone and some appalling bruises."

She swayed a little and I put an arm round her to steady her.

"He's asking for you," went on Tom.

"Uncle Dick," said Mona quietly. "Will you tell Dad what I've told you. But I don't want it to go any further."

Then she went indoors.

He heard me in silence with amazement written large on his face.

"A mistake, Dick," he said when I'd finished. "She must have made a mistake."

But I could see he didn't think so.

"Why it would break his father's heart."

"I don't see that his father need ever know, Tom."

"What's Mona going to do?"

"The betting is a fiver to a shilling that she's going to marry Stubby."

"Marry Stubby!" gasped Tom. "Good Lord!"

Ten minutes later we peeped into Stubby's room.

They never even saw us, but on Stubby's ugly face there was an expression of such joy that old Tom blew his nose loudly as we went down-stairs.

"Good boy," he said gruffly. "I suppose he's proposed and she's said yes."

But he hadn't. Mona told me that afterwards in confidence. She'd had to propose to him.

And I sent Bill Saunders a shilling postal order the next day.

NORFLEET—MAN-HUNTER

By MAX BENTLEY

THE first instalment of Norfleet's man-hunting story told of the $45,000 swindle perpetrated upon him in Texas by the Joe Furey gang of confidence men, and how Norfleet pursued and captured three lesser swindlers. The second instalment dealt with Norfleet's apprehension of the master criminal, Furey, in Jacksonville, Florida, with the conviction of the two Los Angeles officers for accepting a bribe to release Furey and described Furey's death in the Texas penitentiary.

One swindler remained at large. W. B. Spencer, oily-tongued "steerer," had shared honors with Furey in "taking down" Frank Norfleet in the stock market pay-off game. Pursuit of Spencer dropped Norfleet into the largest, most efficient and best protected nest of criminals ever gathered together under the bunco banner, Lou Blonger's Denver gang — Fate must have led the Texan thither — and gave him opportunity on a grand scale to prove himself the master man-hunter of his day.

Twice before since 1919 Norfleet had gum-shoed into Wichita, Kansas, to shadow the home of a relative of Spencer's. On the third trip, after Furey and the California officers had been put away, he had his son Pete with him; and Pete, by "rushing" the public dance halls, learned that Spencer's wife was in Montreal, Canada.

Norfleet had discovered that the way to catch a man is to find his family. With Pete he shoved out for Montreal.

"Buffalo is the gateway to Eastern Canada," he said. "I worked the Buffalo railroad stations, scrutinizing everybody. My luck was stringing with me — on the first day I noticed a familiar-looking masculine back. The man had on a hunting suit and was leaning forward, kissing a woman. Her pretty face was held between his hands. I pretended to read a railroad map and walked up right behind him. He was patting her cheeks and telling her that when he returned he would bring her a nice piece of venison. I heard his voice and I knew I was not mistaken.

"It was Hairy Fist, my old friend of the Daytona stock exchange; the celery farms of Sanford, Florida; the club on the summit of the hill; the motor boat; the messenger with the note; the rope intended for my neck, and the fight at Jacksonville — recollections trooped through my mind of these happenings, and they seemed to have transpired centuries ago. Was I dreaming?"

No, Norfleet was acutely awake and already planning his campaign with consummate skill. In two minutes he had conferred with his son, and young Pete Norfleet had dropped that name and identity, and become a sheep grower from New Mexico and a prosperous one, too — the Norfleet family roll, what was left of it, was turned over to Pete.

The youngster took up with Hairy Fist and was soon ace high in the company of Hairy Fist and his confederate, Montreal-bound. He has that way about him; Norfleet's own irresistible facility for "catching on" with strangers has been passed along to his boy. Hairy Fist, it developed, was not hunting venison but booze. He was rum running and in Montreal was to meet his partner, "Mr. Spencewood," then scouting in the north of Canada. Pete became a bootlegger too! The elder Norfleet circumspectly traveled in a rear coach.

The Texan trailed the trio to the Canadian metropolis. They registered at the Windsor Hotel. While Pete stuck close to Hairy Fist, Norfleet made his peace with the Montreal police authorities. The American consul introduced him to the chief of police, who promised heartiest cooperation. The chief duplicated Norfleet's American warrant for Spencer, but warned the Texan that he must not, under any provocation, shoot.

In Montreal, Norfleet met Arthur Hill, a fellow Texan. Hill was managing the tour of "Bill" Strother, the Human

Spider. Strother was a building climber and was to scale the wall of the Windsor Hotel that night. Norfleet believed that if Spencer were in the city he would attend that exhibition—"con" men always follow the crowd—and he warned Strother not to be alarmed if he heard a rumpus in the throng while his climb was in progress.

"It will only mean that I've nailed Mr. Spencewood," said Norfleet grimly.

Returning to the hotel Norfleet saw Pete and Hairy Fist standing before the bar. Pete wig-wagged that a conference was desired; and following out a prearranged scheme father and son met behind a curtain draping off the bar from the lobby.

"Spencewood" was due on a train in fifteen minutes. Hairy Fist had said so. Fortune was still smiling on the Texans, until——

"Just as Pete started to part the curtains and return to the barroom they were flung apart, and Hairy Fist, who had become nervous at Pete's exit, looked me full in the face. Instant recognition flashed in those gander eyes. He flung his arms out wide and clutched at the curtain as he fell over his own feet.

"He dashed through the barroom. He would warn Spencer. There was no use following him—the railroad station was our goal too, and we were in a hurry.

"Pete and I fought our way through the crowd densely parked in Dominion Square. Bill Strother had started his climb under the flare of a spotlight. We made slow progress. When we finally gained an open road we saw four men crossing the street. As they passed under a street light on the Dominion Square side Pete cried, 'There he goes! That's Spencer now! Watch him walk! That's him, Dad!'

"We were too late. The train had come in. However, not one of Spencer's companions was Hairy Fist or his pal. Maybe Hairy Fist had missed him too. We tried to overtake him before the bunch lost themselves in the packed mass of upturned faces, coming up close behind just as they lined up at the curb, four in a row. They stood gaping at Strother, whose spider legs were slowly but surely

Philip S. Van Cise, Denver District Attorney, with Norfleet's assistance, broke up the most powerful confidence gang in America.

J. Frank Norfleet is the most relentless, and at the same time the most successful man-hunter that I have ever heard of. . . .

At the time Denver was infested with confidence men just prior to our arrests of a large number of those operating in this city, he accidentally came to Denver, (that is, accidentally for us, but purposely for himself) on the trail of his man Spencer. He worked wholeheartedly and unselfishly with my office and gave very valuable assistance in the final round-up and annihilation of Denver's decade-old ring of protected criminals.

Yours very truly,
PHILIP S. VAN CISE.

creeping the smooth side wall of the hotel.

"I took my station at the right hip pocket of Spencer, while Pete moved behind the man at Spencer's side. They were oblivious of us. The crowning triumph of my weary hunt had come.

"At this instant a big, burly Canadian came floundering up behind me. He had his eye riveted on the Human Spider, and not looking where he was going, crashed into me, throwing me into Spencer.

"Spencer swung around with raised fist and looked into my eyes.

"There was no longer any doubt as to who he was. One look at that crooked nose and it was settled.

"He recognized me as quickly as I did him. 'Come on!' he exclaimed to his friends and swung one of them between him and me. They started to paw their way back through the mob of 30,000 people, Spencer in the lead, the others following, and Pete and I after them, Pete ahead of me. As they opened up the trail we followed it.

"After leading the way for fifty yards Spencer checked his flight and whispered something into the ear of a tall heavy-set man. Instantly the man threw his hands into the air and uttered strange idiotic gutteral noises. He reeled in the small opening and just as Pete ran alongside the fellow crashed down on him, mashing him into the snow.

"It was a strange tableau, but I kept my eyes on Spencer who was taking advantage of the blockade to get away as fast as possible.

"I jumped over Pete and the man who was rolling on him in this peculiar sudden frenzy. As I leaped them, I intended to kick him with my foot, but I was not certain that he was an accomplice. I thought it better to let a thug go unkicked than to maim an innocent or afflicted man. So I brought my last foot clear over his body. I tore after Spencer who had gained on me. As I left, I saw Pete and the man still wallowing on the white ground.

"I pursued Spencer for fifty yards. By this time we had reached the outskirts of the vast throng and had more room. I yelled at Spencer to throw up his hands. He heard me and swung around in his tracks, facing me.

"'Hold up your hands, Spencer! You're my prisoner!' I shouted out.

"'That's not my name!' he retorted, as his hands shot into the air.

"Then he proceeded to tell me I was mistaken. While he was explaining, one of the men with him jerked a card out of his pocket and held it towards me saying:

"' This is his name on this card. He is not Spencer! '

"I had no time to look at the card, I was too busy shouting for the police. As I reached to my hip for my handcuffs, I received a sledge-hammer blow on my jaw.

"Whoever the slugger was, he must have been a left-handed one for he hit me on that side. As I went down under the blow, I locked the left corner of Spencer's overcoat tail in my left hand. It was the same grip I had sunk into the lapel of Furey's coat that day in the Hilton cafe.

"Spencer kicked my face with the round toes of his rubber overshoe which fortunately, for me, softened the impact.

"I wanted to kill him. I was almost blinded with agonizing pain. Canadian law or not, I thought, I'll kill him this time.

"I reached up from where I was sprawled and with my right hand punched him in the groin, intending to shoot him straight through lengthwise. As I angled my gun for fire I saw the form of Bill Strother clinging to the wall at the topmost point of the building. In that instant I realized that the crack of a pistol shot might confuse him, knowing that I was out for my man in the crowd, and cause him to flinch and fall to death. That was all that kept me from blowing Spencer up the middle. I did not pull the trigger.

"Like a frightened animal Spencer leaped into the air with the pain of my blow. He screamed oaths from the hurt of it. He broke into a prancing, high-stepping run, dragging me after him, still clinging to his coat tail like a sled. This rapid transit continued for twenty or thirty yards until suddenly the coat tail gave way and I was left flat in the road with a piece of it in my hand. Spencer broke into a wilder run and I sprang after him.

"The blood was dripping from my face and left round scarlet patches on the snow, and I had lost him. Where

Portrait of a Gentleman With a Think Coming

AMERICAN POLICE
DAILY NEWSPAPER
NORFLEET TRAPS 33 CONFIDENCE MEN IN DENVER
HALE COUNTY, TEXAS RANCHER WHO TRACKED DOWN FUREY GANG OF SLICK CROOKS, WITHOUT HELP AND AT HIS OWN EXPENSE, MAKES ANOTHER HAUL
AN' AIN'T IT A SAD COMMENTARY ON TEXAS AN' TEXANS THAT WE HAVEN'T EVEN DUG UP NORFLEET'S EXPENSES FOR HIS GENUINE PUBLIC SERVICE TO US!!!

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram voiced the appreciation of southwestern states for Norfleet's services to the country.

was Pete? What had happened to my boy? If they have hurt one hair of his head, I thought, I will run them to the ends of the earth and strangle them with my own hands."

Pete was not hurt, just hopelessly outdistanced. But Norfleet was. For ten days he lay in his bed at the hotel, swathed in bandages. He was utterly weary and gave himself like a child into Pete's tender ministrations, and Arthur Hill's, and Bill Strother's. Strother, iron-nerved death-defyer, cried like a child when he learned Spencer had been spared for his sake. "Did you do that for me, Frank? Did you give me that consideration?" he said brokenly. "You are the first man who ever came out to see me that didn't thrill at the chance that I might fall."

When he was able to travel Norfleet turned southward, moving toward Denver, the con man's heaven at that time, but making many stops. "Everywhere we went," his story goes on, "we would search the rogues' galleries. In no place were we able to get a picture of Spencer. Of all of the cameras, kodaks and pic-

ture-making contrivances in the world, it did seem as if one should have been trained on his crooked nose some time or other. But hunt as we did, none had come to light. Verbal descriptions of people are far from satisfactory.

"Up to then, there were only two rogues' galleries left in the United States of any size that we had not searched. Pete went to Sioux City to go through their files, and I remained in Chicago to see what I could find out.

"At the end of a week, we met in Kansas City. He had news for me. In Sioux City, the rogue's gallery had yielded nothing, but from there he had gone to the Omaha, Nebraska, gallery, the last one of any size in the country to come under our microscopic eyes.

"There he found the first photograph of Spencer. It was filed under the name of Charles G. Harris, alias Gus Schultz, No. 3317. On the reverse side, was a notation indicating that the same picture was on record in Kansas City: No. 6334, Chas. G. Harris, alias 'Whitley' Harris.

"This was a reflection on the efficiency of the Kansas City files, as on our previous trip there the police had declared there was no photograph of any one by this name.

"We went to the police station at Kansas City and requested to see the records again. There was no picture on file of Spencer, Harris or Schultz.

"We called the attention of the Captain of Detectives to the photograph which bore the notation that there was one on file in his office. He studied it with bent head.

"He walked over to a little filing cabinet and from a pigeonhole took a small metal box, turned a key in the lock and opened the lid. From the box, he took a bunch of photographs and from among them, he pulled out one of Spencer; a duplicate of the one Pete had brought from Omaha.

"'I guess we must have overlooked this the last time you were here,' was all he said.

"On the reverse of this picture, the record showed that Spencer had been arrested by their department and turned loose. Also one of the two officers who had gone to Excelsior Springs with us had made the arrest."

Norfleet circulated Spencer's portrait from one end of the country to the other. Within a few weeks he got news of his quarry, and sure enough, Spencer was plainly headed for Denver. It was very characteristic of Norfleet that he did not hie directly to Denver after him. He hung around different hotel lobbies till he got "wised up" on Colorado's history in confidence stunts. But at Colorado Springs he got a very disconcerting check. The Chief of Police warned him that no amateur hunter of criminals was wanted in Denver just then. Colonel Philip S. Van Cise, Denver's district attorney, was laying plans of his own to round up the confidence gang which for years, openly and without police molestation, had preyed upon tourists. Norfleet was told it would be better for him to "lay low" and not "butt in on the game."

"I was not inclined to consider anybody's plans more important than mine," he says. "I felt sure Spencer would be with the crowd, and I believed I could be of service to Colonel Van Cise. I had previously corresponded with him, offering to share with his office whatever information I got. So when I reached Denver I called up Roy Sansom, chief investigator of the district attorney's office, on the telephone.

"'This is Norfleet,' I said. 'I just called to let you know I am in town.' Sansom was dismayed. He feared I would ruin everything. Business men of Denver had subscribed a fund of $15,000 for cleaning out the bunco gang, and Van Cise was in the mountains, in seclusion, laying out his campaign. Thus far he had nothing to go on. Big swindles were in progress at the time, he felt sure of that, but he had been unable to lay hand on a specific case warranting a raid. Imported imitation suckers, experienced in playing the boob, were even then working to cinch a capture; but the trail so far was cold."

Norfleet knew he could heat it up.

"By now I was familiar with the features of the most prominent bunco men in the country. My rogues' gallery was a wonder, I had been collecting art specimens in every city of the land, and had spent many nights studying the faces of these men.

"While I was waiting for Van Cise I got together a new disguise and spent my spare time in adjusting it and ac-

customing my body to its new demands. In a light Palm Beach suit it was hard to recognize myself in the glass. It was the hue of straw and had one of those pinch-back belt arrangements that strap the spine crosswise. As I planned to represent a rube in city clothes, this style of garment was a great aid. I decided to adopt a posture of bending forward like a cotton picker. The little strap across the back heightened my humpy appearance. The coat was of such lightweight material that it was difficult to hide the gun on my hip. Therefore I simulated a stiff-waistedness and walked with a clawlike hand upon my hip after the manner of rheumatic old men.

"I became a willing victim of the beauty parlors and their blonde, brunette and titian-haired operators. My gray mustache had grown long. I had it dyed a dark brown with thinned edges and a smart upward curl. My hair was changed to brown and cut bowl style. Brown eyebrows matched it, the hairs long and bristling, their shagginess giving me the appearance of peering out under a thatched roof. A cocky little Panama hat rode uncertaintly atilt my head. In my left hand I clasped the handle of a wavering cane. Out of my twelve sets of false teeth I chose one to suit this old rube.

"When I spoke I achieved a high tone, and cracked it in the middle. I was a one hundred per cent boob and sucker. I knew that Mr. L. A. Mulligan, of Ellis County, Texas, was as good as in the game already.

"Van Cise returned and accepted my offer of assistance. He was desperate at the failure of his imported suckers to deliver any swindlers. On the day we talked, he had been informed that several of the known bunco gang had had their baggage taken to the depot preparatory to embarking for other fields. We arranged an elaborate system of communication and I was turned loose with a warning not to speak to any officer in the police or sheriff's department. Van Cise told me that while there were many trustworthy officers in Denver there were others not to be trusted, and I would not know which was which.

"I said good-bye to him and promised to let him know if anything developed. He was very uneasy at having me loose in the city for fear of detective inability and its consequent scattering of the bunco forces, before his office could get them.

"I saw his mental reaction to the situation and I did my best to relieve his mind as to the possible harm I would do his organization. I guaranteed that if I could not serve his office constructively, I would not do so destructively.

"He laid special stress on my not even calling his office on the telephone. For emergency use he gave me another number."

Norfleet had not over-estimated his knowledge of bunco psychology. Where the other fake suckers had failed, he succeeded—a con man was angling for him in thirty minutes. Before the day was over L. A. Mulligan of Texas was in the clutches of R. C. Davis, *alias* Leon Felix, bunco steerer; P. J. Miller, *alias* Art Cooper, spieler; and Leonard Rogers, *alias* Len Reamey, paymaster and bookmaker. After satisfying himself that he was entering the hoary but ever-effective stock market game, Norfleet changed back into his own usual clothes and teeth and slipped away for a midnight conference with Van Cise and his men, and the impending raid was finally organized. It was to be made by Colorado state rangers, without the knowledge of the police, and the catch were to be taken to a Denver church instead of the jail—it being highly probable that the underworld would be tipped off from the jail with promptness and despatch. Norfleet was to give the word to go when he had his case riveted down. Everything depended upon him.

The web fell over the Texan almost exactly as it had fallen nearly four years before, in his own state, when Furey was drawing the loop; only he was now awake, anticipating and checking off the various steps with an expert foreknowledge that made his heart sing with happiness. He recognized various criminals on the street simply from his exhaustive knowledge of rogues' galleries and his uncanny memory.

He successfully spread ahead information as to his great cotton farm, and Davis, Miller and Rogers were the trio that took him in hand now, expecting to clean him out just as Furey and his gang had done—but if they had suspected who it was they had in hand they would have fled far and fast for Norfleet's

name had become a terror to evil-doers.

That night Norfleet achieved a secret meeting with Colonel Van Cise and his assistants and told them the general lineup.

They were delighted.

"'I've got the stock exchange runners on the hip and will be in the real game within a day or two,' I promised.

"They said they were depending on the rangers for making the raid when the nest was discovered.

"I expressed my unqualified approval of this fine arrangement and chuckled to think how the police would look when this red-blood crew got busy.

"I offered my services to them under the condition that I be allowed a free rein and an unrestricted hand in dealing with the situation. I made it clear that I wished to act on my own judgment entirely but would depend upon their support when the time came.

"This was freely granted and it was decided I should go ahead and work, communicating progress to them. Several methods of reporting my moves were discussed but it was left up to me.

"The rest of the night was spent in writing letters to my wife; some bona fide and some for display use. I also wrote one to myself from her, and put it in my pocket for future use. Even to-day, I consider it one of the finest I ever received from her. I wrote it in a fine, small hand, which I considered truly feminine. It was far different from my own large lettering and was as follows:

Ferris, Texas, August 17th, 1921.

Dear Husband:

I am very sorry I could not meet you in Denver as you expected. I know you will be greatly disappointed, but you know as well as I that one of us ought to remain at home to keep the pot boiling. By the way, I collected the $15,000.00 on the hundred acre oil lease that we signed before you left home. I deposited $2,000.00 in the bank at Ferris, the balance I deposited in the bank at Dallas. Is that the way you wanted it distributed?

The drillers have struck oil in the corner of our field. They have quit drilling, and the company is leasing every acre of land they can get around this well. I am holding down a lease on 236 acres of our land with my signature and I recommend that you come home at once and sign this lease so we can get the money and then you can go back to Denver and stay as long as you please. That will leave us the 19 acres where the building and the big tank of water are located and we can get our own price for that, if we want to let it go, as the drillers want the water for drilling purposes.

"I ended with a tender love message."

The familiar game of the stock exchange came along, played according to the old schedule, so that Norfleet knew what was coming next at every turn. Either Miller or Davis or both stuck to their sucker every minute, from the time he was set to making money on the false stock exchange. Davis claimed to be a Texan—and really knew enough about Texas to worry Norfleet. On the ground that "we Texans must stick together," he roomed with his victim.

The first day's betting left Norfleet with $3,000 in bills in his possession, so naturally the con men were not going to let him run around loose.

"The next day the bidding opened just before noon. Davis and I went in together. Miller was already there and ready for a big day.

"We were all sitting around the center table going over the latest stock quotations in the newspapers. Bid slips and other paper paraphernalia littered the table.

"I placed a stump of pencil between my fingers so it could not be seen and as I appeared to smooth the paper out and write my bid, I branded the different papers and letters and cards with my own cattle brand. These marks might come in handy later, in an identification party, I thought."

They did!

The play took its predestined course till it came to the big act:

"I started for the door with my fortune.

"'Just a minute Mr. Mulligan!' Zachery raised a detaining finger. 'I would like to see your membership card, if you please!'

"'My membership card!' I repeated.

"'Yes! Are you not a member of this exchange?'

"'Why, no, I'm not a member of this exchange!' I backed to the door. 'I have no card.'

"Zachery scowled, 'I thought you told me you were a member of this exchange!'

"Miller came to the door and said soothingly:

"'Why, Zachery, I told you these

gentlemen wanted to make their bids just as I did. I showed you my membership card. That's enough, isn't it?'

"'No!' He stepped toward me. 'Mulligan, I can't let you have all that money.'

"'Can't let me have it? Well, I've done got it!'"

This complication was settled after much play-acting from all concerned by Norfleet turning back to the office a fortune of a quarter of a million—supposing all the packages of bills were marked right—and accepting a due-bill, receipt and statement in its stead. His fortune was to be returned to him any time within thirty days if Norfleet, meaning Mulligan, the sucker, could show a deposit of $100,000 in any Denver bank.

"Our sole aim," said the secretary of this exchange branch, "is to be assured that in the event you had lost, you would have been able to cover your loss."

Len Reamey

At last Miller proposed to accept money from a rich uncle whose proffers of aid he was always refusing. Now, though, for a friend he would borrow the needed $100,000 and keep it long enough to show it in a Denver bank. They took the poor sucker into a building like a hotel only that the lobby was totally uninhabited, a deserted place; Norfleet was hustled from the car and given no chance to see the number.

"I made a mental picture of the place and from the front door to the steps, which were at the rear, was thirty-one strides.

"A poor offering for future identification, but better perhaps than none.

"The steps at the rear made a turn to the left of a few stairs and ended on a small landing. An elevator ran up from there.

"We were lifted to the third floor and went into room No. 310. I wondered that Davis and Miller did not question the ease with which they were able to pull me anywhere and everywhere after them. For this reason, I appeared to be worried to death, thinking if they were suspicious, my apparent frenzy might account for my tractibility.

"The upper part of the building seemed to be a regular hotel. The elevator boy was the only human being connected with the place that I saw from the time I stepped inside until the day I left. It had a mysteriously quiet atmosphere.

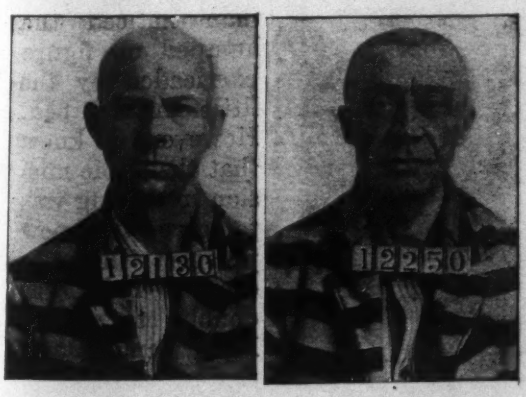
"The room was large and well furnished. A bath adjoined. The bed that I supposed would be mine, if I was invited to stay, was a little folding affair to the left of the door, which opened from the main hall.

"As I passed the foot of the bed, I gave it a quick pressure. It sprang into the air and closed like a bear trap. No sleeping on that bed for me, I decided."

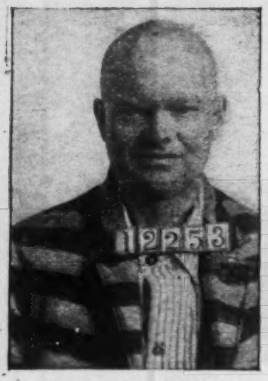
The men heard an "extra" being called in the street and Davis went out after it, whereupon Miller took occasion to explain that though Davis was all right he talked too much and that Mulligan must help keep him muzzled.

"He'll ruin our job," said Miller passionately, "if he don't seal up that

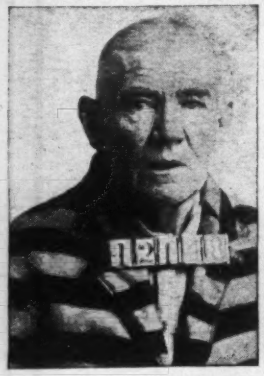
Leon Felix, Steerer *Lou Blonger, Fixer*



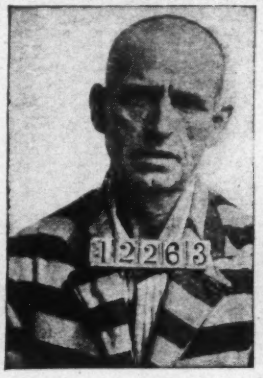
Art Cooper, Spieler *A. W. Duff, Boss*



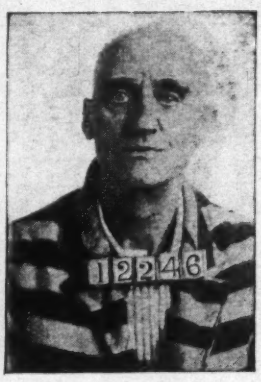
Stephen Olsen



Jack Hardaway



Walter Byland



Denver Ed Smith

spout of his. Now, there is only one way to protect us all and that is for you to watch him. Keep him in this room and keep it locked and make him shut his mouth if you have to gag him."

"That's right, Mr. Miller, we've done gone this far an' we can't afford to spoil this here game now. We can't afford to lose."

Norfleet felt this was about what Miller hoped he would say. It was getting to be a positive pleasure to see how happy his answers made both of them.

So while Norfleet was being kept a prisoner in this room to keep him from telling tales out of school, he was to fancy himself the jailer of Davis! The smart scheme would work one way as well as the other.

Davis came back with the news that the rangers had been ordered away to take care of trouble in the coal fields. Van Cise was left with only the distrusted local police to help him out in his desperate war against the crooks.

Norfleet saw himself in as dangerous a pinch as ever closed in on him even. His jailers showed that they were none too sure of him; the least misstep might start their suspicions boiling; he did not know how he was ever going to get at Van Cise with Davis everlastingly at his elbow, and anyway what could Van Cise do with the rangers away?

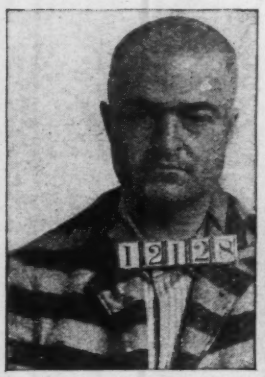
So Norfleet was really enjoying himself!

But he got a little too much of suffering and peril before he was through with that room.

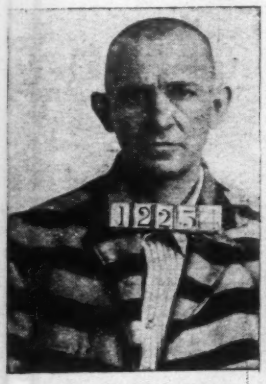
It was not long before different members of the gang began dropping in for informal calls. The room was an established asset in their business. Norfleet wondered who had last slept in that little bear-trap bed, and if he had ever waked up.

He says:

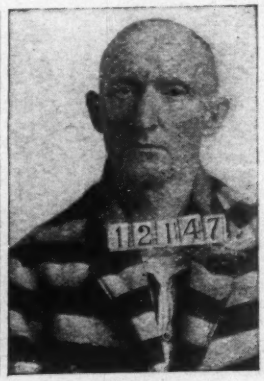
"Those who came in were of all types and styles in physical composition and criminal classification. None of them had I ever known personally, but several, photographically. I was not introduced to any of them. I kept my painful corner position and apparently few of them more than noticed the humped up figure barricaded by the little unused bed. However, I knew that their sole mission in coming was to give the new prospect 'the once over.' This was doubly to assure Miller and Davis that I was not a plant.



Jock French



Andrey Potts

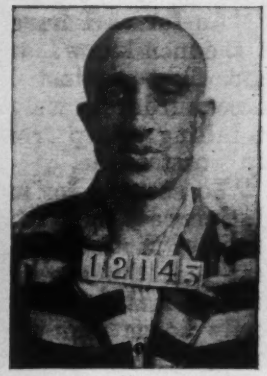


Red Wilson

Louis Straub

G. H. Williams

Elmer Meade



Louis Mushnick

"I lived in dread and hope. Dread that I would be recognized before I had broken into their nest and hope that among the stream of callers Spencer would float in. Had Spencer come I would have had him and the others in the room covered before he could have recognized me. My greatest fear was being recognized by some one of them unknown to me."

Of course, in the start-off Miller was emphasizing how sure he was of his uncle's money, while Norfleet, knowing all about that twice-told fairy tale, was thinking out next moves, theirs and his.

You see, the game continued to duplicate, move by move, the one Joe Furey had staged in Dallas. Well-drilled con men get letter-perfect in their parts and then stick to them. Originality in executives is not encouraged.

When dinner-time came, Norfleet's jailers went forth one at a time. He was never left alone.

"Davis," Norfleet's narrative continues, "invited me to go out with him to dinner, but I thought I had better stick close and see what happened.

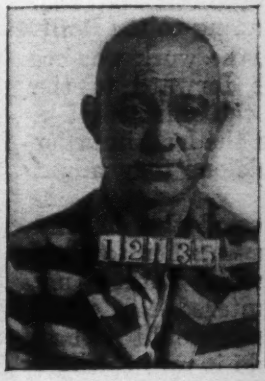
"When he returned, he brought me some sandwiches, but I was afraid of them, so declined, saying I was so tired out with the excitement I was afraid to eat. They accepted this as natural in a man of my age.

"We all turned in early. As I had expected, the little folding trap was my bed. It headed against the wall near the door from the main hotel corridor. Any one entering the room had to swing the door back against my bed. Before they could see me, they had to look around the door or else shut it.

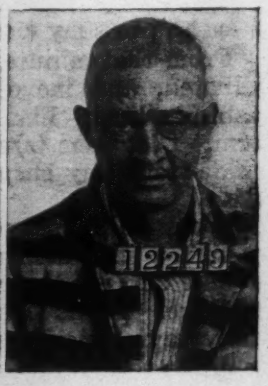
"This made a semi-blind for me and gave me the drop on all who entered. I put the small straight chair on the opposite side of the bed in the corner. I sat on this most of the time. While it put the length of the bed between me and the door, it gave me the advantage of a corner. My right side was against the wall as well as my back.

"In this way I could keep my right hand on my right hip gun and be seen by no one in the room. Not once in the four days I was trapped in this den did I undress, get into bed, close my eyes in sleep, or have anything to eat. When I felt I must appear to sleep I lay crosswise on the cot, my hand, grasping my revolver, shoved under the pillow.

George Tip Belcher



George Kelly



Wm. Dougherty

"As far as I have ever learned none of the men knew I was armed. It was a mad fight against hunger, sleep and these murderous wolves. The awful fear of falling asleep from nerve strain was the worst battle.

"To account for my sleeplessness and abstinence from food, I feigned neuralgia of the face. And I can safely say that had the suggestion produced the genuine malady, it would have been more easily borne than the constant struggle to simulate pain and suffering. Hour after hour, I held my unswollen face between my hands. I rocked my head from side to side, stifling moans.

"I tried my jaws to see if food could find an entrance, but the stabbing pain locked them in pretended agony. My eyes, from wakefulness, became genuinely blood shot."

Norfleet's neuralgia finally must needs develop into a genuine tooth-ache and that without a tooth in his head! But a dentist was his best bet for getting a chance to telephone Van Cise. More of that presently.

When Miller's "uncle" turned out to be in some unreachable place in Mexico —of course—came the inevitable question, "What resources have you, Mulligan?"

Mulligan drew out the letter we have read and was garrulous about his resources and the discovery of oil on his property. Davis had been already given a chance to size up this letter.

"Of course Davis had got the general outline of the letter over my shoulder three days before, when I was in his car. What I had just given them, backed up with what Davis had seen, established in their minds that I was a legitimate sucker. I could see that it was mutually settled to press my cleaning to the limit.

"From that minute, the work was coordinated, and moved forward to the crashing climax like the onrush of a storm. I let them take the lead in order to side-track any suspicions they might have.

"Soon, Miller suggested that I send my wife a wire instructing her to close the deal and get the money without my signature. Davis countered this plan, mildly saying perhaps it would be best for me to return and do it up in proper shape, adding that he would go with me.

"After criss-crossing the proposed trip several times it was decided that I telegraph my wife.

"I proceeded to do it and I could only pray that Ferris, Texas, boasted no citizen by the name of Mrs. L. A. Mulligan."

Whether it did or not, the time was coming and that soon when that telegram must give Norfleet away unless he got the best of the struggle before then.

"The second day passed. All that punctuated the uncertainty was the entrance signal: two heavy raps on the door, followed by two light ones. To my racked nerves, they all sounded like cannon balls thrown against the wooden panel."

All his hopes were on the verge of collapse in a ruin that must cost him his life. One of the pressing perils was that he would be taken willy-nilly to Ferris, Texas, to get mythical money from a mythical Mrs. Mulligan. He could only plead he was too sick to travel.

"I had not eaten for three nights and three days, nor had I closed my eyes in sleep," he tells. "Those two were the most dangerous men I had ever met. I had the gnawing fear that they already suspected me, and I was taking no chances either with food or sleep. They were determined to take me to Texas."

So now he began to cry for a dentist and to a dentist he got—and not the one his keepers chose, either; by making row enough he managed to get in the first dental office they came to after the three got on the street.

Norfleet threw himself upon the mercy of the dentist and found in the latter an enthusiastic and quick-witted ally. He was given a phial of amber fluid, to be swallowed as a last resort; it was guaranteed to produce an instantaneous and deathly sickness on an empty stomach that would put a crimp in plans for travel; and he got to Van Cise on the telephone.

In the ante-room an attendant had demanded the patient's address for her records, and Davis had hesitantly given it as the Hotel Metropole. You can be sure that Norfleet had not forgot the room number. So the raid could be arranged to come off at six the next morning, the signal to be the knocks used by the gang, two heavy, two light. "Don't let them kill my men," warned Van Cise.

Sure enough Miller and Davis prepared to start with him for Texas that day, but he genuinely fainted at the station, and they sullenly had to take him back to room 310.

Night came. "We flung ourselves across the beds. They slept—I waited. The night dragged through. At three o'clock Miller left the room, saying he would return in a few hours. At five o'clock I got up and began pacing back and forth. Davis' traveling bag was open and conveniently near the head of his bed. In it was his gun. He was always ready for a surprise attack. This worried me as the head of his bed was in direct line with the hall door; he could get a shot at any one in the hall before that person could get into the room.

"Next to the bag was a rocking chair. I fussed around the room for a few minutes until the coming dawn made it light enough for me to see my way about without stumbling over the furniture, then tiptoed to the bag and with my foot pushed it stealthily under the bed. Then I moved the chair nearer Davis' hand. Tiptoeing to the door I turned the key back. I slipped my own gun under the pillow of my bed and lay down. Everything was ready.

"I looked at my watch. One minute of six! The little ticks sounded like steam hammers.

"*One! two!* sharply. *One! two!* this time lightly. I swallowed my heart. Davis' hand crashed against the back of the rocking chair. He spat out a great surprised oath as I raised up over the footboard of his bed and covered him.

" 'Lay your black head back on that pillow before I blow it off. Come in!' I shouted. The door opened and the muzzles of two guns preceded Kenneth W. Robinson, assistant district attorney, and a ranger. They slid in and closed the door behind them. We put my handcuffs on Davis and threw him into the bathroom, locking him in. Mrs. Robinson had sent me two chicken sandwiches and I devoured them in about two gulps, telling the officers in a rapid whisper all that had happened since Van Cise turned me loose. We waited for Miller.

"At 7:30 he rapped on the door. I unlocked it and turned the knob with my left hand, opening the door back against me, very slowly. My gun was in my right hand, out of sight.

" 'How is the sick man?' were his first words. I was sorry he said that, but, 'Better!' I exclaimed, shoving my gun into his stomach and closing the door with my hip. ' Stick 'em up, Miller!' Davis was led from the bathroom and the ranger guarded the pair while Robinson and I rifled their belongings.

"While Davis was dressing himself, Robinson remarked sympathetically to me: 'Well, Norfleet, you've had a rough time, haven't you?' At the word Norfleet Davis let out a yell, threw up his hands and dropped across the bed in a state of abject collapse."

The bag made in Norfleet's room was duplicated that morning—the morning of August 24, 1922, in many parts of Denver. Van Cise's net fell over the bunco lookout in the Union Pacific Building; the stock exchange in the Denham Theater Building; a dozen hotels and rooming houses where confidence men were living; the State Capitol grounds; Denver's beautiful Civic Center—and each place yielded its catch. It was engineered by the district attorney himself, with assistants and investigators from his office and eighteen Colorado rangers under command of Adjutant General Hamrock, and it was a complete surprise not only to the army of swindlers pursuing their trade in Denver, but to the police.

Thirty-four captures were made. As has been said the prisoners were not taken to any jail, but were herded into the basement of the First Universalist church, in the heart of the fashionable Capitol Hill district, and kept under heavy guard while charges were being prepared. With one stroke Van Cise broke the backbone of buncoism in the Colorado metropolis.

The Denver Post of that date said: "Organized crime in Denver has been dealt its deathblow. To-day's raids are the culmination of a campaign of more than a year on the part of Van Cise. Fifteen thousand dollars was contributed by prominent Denver men and women to finance the clean-up of what is known as the notorious Florida-Denver gang. This gang, formerly directed by Joe Furey, who died in prison recently, is reputed to have mulcted Denverites and tourists here of at least $1,500,000 in the last two years.

"Cooperating with Van Cise was J. Frank Norfleet of Texas, known as the 'nemesis of the confidence man.' Norfleet, who has caused the arrests of a score of bunco artists throughout the United States in the last two years, has been in Denver for two weeks, posing as a wealthy sucker to gather evidence against the ring. Evidently a carrier of the germ buncoramus that attracts the steerer to the steered, Norfleet is entitled to take his place with the Northwest Mounted Police and the Count of Monte Cristo, for when Norfleet goes out to get his man he gets him.

"The raids were conducted from the Universalist church to prevent the gang's being 'tipped off' if they had been made through regular channels. Had either the city or county jail been used, every crook in Denver would have known of the raids in five minutes, Van Cise said. The success of the coup was largely due to the fact that the first place raided was the 'tip-off' headquarters of the gang on 17th Street. This place had been conducted as an organized center for the dissemination of advance tips concerning intended arrests."

Van Cise had trapped the leading bunco men of the nation. The most sensational catch of all was Lou Blonger, 73-year-old Denver millionaire, owner of cherry orchards and dairies, a resident of the city for fifty years, and for thirty-five years a political boss and king of the underworld. When Blonger fell, A. W. Duff fell with him. Duff was also wealthy and powerful. Blonger was the brains, the evil genius, of the gang, and Duff was his first lieutenant.

The Post of August 29 said: "After the raid Lou Blonger and A. W. Duff rolled up to the criminal court in a splendid limousine, left the chauffeur outside, went in, attended to business pertaining to their $25,000 bonds, and departed, having no commerce with the less fortunate of the district attorney's catch."

As for the less fortunate themselves, when they were lined up for inspection by a little group of bunco victims who had been taken with them in the raids and were now to join Norfleet's identification party—"In their sleeveless vests the arms of the men showed white and soft as a pampered woman's. There wasn't a well-developed arm muscle in the lot. There wasn't what a phrenologist would call a normal face or head. Yet, seen by the casual observer, that bunch of men would have been set down as a fine-looking group."

Of the thirty-four prisoners thirteen were sent to other cities to answer to prior charges standing against them or made bonds and jumped them. One, Len Reamey, *alias* Rogers—the pay-off man in Norfleet's case—"squealed," agreed to turn state's evidence in return for immunity from prosecution. The remaining twenty were indicted in Denver and arraigned in a single trial, before Judge George F. Dunklee.

The trial commenced the last week in January, 1923. Norfleet and Len Reamey were the star witnesses for the state, Norfleet being on the stand for thirty hours and undergoing a terrific cross-examination at the hands of defense counsel.

The prosecution opened the case by baring the swindle of Henry John Gray, a solid citizen of Exeter, England.

"Gray," said the Denver Post, "is the trustful soul who traveled 11,600 miles at his own expense just to add $25,000 to the financial rating of the wolves who infested Denver. The swindlers did not have to beg Gray to jump in and get wet. They just showed him the lake, and they couldn't have kept him out if they had tried. They met him here at a fly-casting tournament and made $20 for nothing for him. He lent his name, as they all do, and on a $1,000 bet made $2,000. After he had swallowed the confirm-your-bid bait they sent him back to England for $25,000. He made the trip alone, sold securities to raise the money, returned happy and wealthy, and lost every penny in the same old way they all lose it. The swindlers took pity on him to the extent of giving him a ticket to England and $150. Gray has returned to Denver to testify against the men who fleeced him. He has been forced to face badgerings and insinuations and insults in this trial as a penalty for coming 5,800 miles to assist the State of Colorado in driving out the wolves who had been preying upon visitors here."

Len Reamey told an astonishing story. He had been a Denver bookmaker and pay-off man since 1920. In that year eight men were fleeced of $108,400, to

THEY'LL HAVE TO ENLARGE IT A BIT TO MAKE IT FIT OUR MR. NORFLEET
TEXAS
WHEN IT COMES TO CROOK 'CATCHIN' THE BEST OF 'EM DON'T SIZE UP WITH THE MALE CENTER GO-GETTER—EVEN IN THE GOOD OLE DIME NOVELS
WM. PINKERTON, GREATEST DETECTIVE IN THE WORLD

This shows what the people of Texas thought of Norfleet. From the Forth Worth Star-Telegram.

his own knowledge; in 1921, twelve men of $226,020; while in the month of August, 1922, one man had been taken down for $25,000 and eleven others were "going through" the stock market when the net fell. Reamey was the bookmaker in each case.

From the prosecution's opening statement to the jury: "The defendant, Lou Blonger, has been the brains and head of the organization. He has lived here for about fifty years. He was like the general of an army who directs the activities of his soldiers from headquarters, out of sight of the enemy. This man would not appear upon the streets with, or associate with the ordinary members of the group of confidence men. He had for that purpose an active head, or lieutenant, A. W. Duff, who kept in constant touch with all the conspirators and maintained secondary headquarters, or reporting and observing headquarters, known as the lookout."

In the "pay-off game," so Reamey testified, there are three divisions of swindlers, namely:

1. The steerer, whose duty it is to hang around the public parks, museums, hotel lobbies and other places of interest,

for the purpose of picking up a tourist and so ingratiating himself that he can then introduce the tourist to

2. The spieler, who poses as an employee of a large Eastern brokerage concern and professes to have inside information on the rise and fall of the stock market. He is finally induced to pass along some of this information, proves his infallibility in an initial bet, and so escorts the steerer and victim to

3. The bookmaker, or clerk at the fake exchange, who pays off the initial winnings and then makes the demand for "confirmation money."

At Denver there was a fourth division: the fixer, who "runs the town" and arranges for police protection. Blonger was the fixer, working through Duff.

Bunco vernacular, as given out by Reamey, covers these quaintly expressive terms:

The victim is called the sucker. He is also known as the boob, chump or egg.

He is "tied" when he falls for the scheme and goes, or sends for, his money.

"Beating a sucker" means to get his money.

"Blowing a sucker off" means to get rid of him after his money has been obtained. Police or detectives are sometimes called in to "blow off" a sucker who has protested, or "squawked."

The "store" is the fake stock exchange. The "big store" is the city or district belonging to some particular gang. Denver was the largest of big stores. The Denver-Colorado Springs-Manitou territory was known as the big store of Blonger and Duff. No con man was allowed to work there unless belonging to their gang and taking orders from them. In the summer of 1922 Duff learned that two swindlers were in town working independently with the petty "playing the match" game. A few days later they were jailed. Until Van Cise's raid, according to their own boast, Blonger and Duff had never "lost a man" in their big store. Not one had ever been arrested for swindling.

The "lookout" is a room used as headquarters of the organization, from the windows of which the spieler and bookmaker can observe the steerer as he walks past with a sucker.

The "convincer" is the initial bet.

The "nut" is the expense incurred in running the confidence game.

A "score" has been made when a sucker is beaten.

The "boodle" is the name for the dummy money packages at the store. Each package is covered with an ordinary bankwrapper marked so many thousand dollars, and commonly has a $100 bill on top and bottom with $1 bills between, all good money. When the Denver paraphernalia was examined it included seven packages of money marked to contain $135,000 and worth $2,200.

Len Reamey said, as reported in the Denver Times, "We had here, before Colonel Van Cise interfered, the greatest pay-off center in the world. Denver was a con man's heaven. It was just a case of free hunting and God help the victim! Duff always boasted that in the long years the store had been running in Denver he had never lost a man, meaning he had never lost a worker to the law. Why, the protection was police proof, I tell you, and nobody thought there was a chance to get caught."

As for himself, in throwing light on how criminals are made, "I was born in Arkansas and I got through the third grade in school, that was all. When I was seventeen I went down to Louisville and started to work on lunch wagons following the fairs. As lunch-counter boy I met the racetrack touts. I was good timber—they taught me touting. I learned their life and entered it. As a petty grafter I met the big fish, the pay-off crew, and so I came to join them. I worked up gradually from tout and the lazy South to Lou Blonger and Denver. This was heaven, easy money, until the raid."

Reamey told the jury how, when the con game was poor, he would "play the match" to make expenses. In playing the match two swindlers get a sucker and match dollars with him, the odd man to win. One con man "comes heads" and the other tails, so one or the other invariably wins. It is a contemptibly small graft and con men indulge in it only when big game is scarce, since the thought of doing any sort of work is out of the question.

On direct examination Reamey told how two Denver detectives had helped Duff get rid of a sucker named Yezner. Swindled of $19,000, Yezner pulled a

gun on the steerer. Duff called two officers to his aid, and the sucker was hustled, protesting and bewildered, out of town. One of the detectives said: "There is no use in your staying here. The con men have spotters watching you. As long as you are in town we cannot accomplish anything, but we have a good description and will get the men in a few days. Go home and keep quiet and we will notify you." Reamey said he was in the lookout when Yezner's $19,000 was later divided.

So much for Blonger's power in Denver.

But Blonger's day was done, and Duff's with him. The king fixer and his lieutenant were each given a seven to ten years' sentence in the Colorado penitentiary while the lesser swindlers drew terms ranging from three to ten years. Nineteen of the twenty are still in stripes, but Blonger himself served less than a year. He escaped. That is to say, he died in the penitentiary on April 20th of this year, a broken, bitter and ruined old convict of seventy-four years.

This was all wonderful and brought Norfleet much glory, but Spencer was still at large; and finding out the hotel he had escaped from in wild haste the morning of the raid was poor consolation. Norfleet was the last man in the world to be compensated by these captures for missing the last of the five who had done him dirt. The trail still stretched before him, and after a great ovation given to him and Van Cise he shoved out for Ogden, Utah. Too late. Spencer had just boarded a train for Helena, Montana.

"From Montana I followed him into Canada again," tells Norfleet. "He had crossed the line at Nelson but again I was just too late to nab him. From there he struck into Eastern Canada, to Kingston, Ontario, his old home, and Montreal. When I reached Montreal I learned he had been arrested under the name Hurd, mugged and fingerprinted, and turned loose. Still too late.

"Then, some weeks later, San Francisco reported Spencer had been there and was last seen going southeastward in an automobile with a Nevada license. I trailed him into Denver, barely missed him at the tourist camp, and picked up the trail again at Raton Pass, New Mexico, where a watchman had seen him in a car with a woman, going south. I had information that he would make Mineral Wells, a Texas tourist resort. Since he had abandoned the trains for the automobile, I concluded to play that game, too. I went to my home in Texas, got out the trusty flivver, and, with my 15-year-old daughter at the wheel, made a record-breaking drive to Mineral Wells. I just missed him again."

Norfleet was desperately tired. He rested a week on a farm near Dallas and then drove into that North Texas metropolis to pick up the trail again. Upon arrival he was handed a telegram from his wife announcing receipt of a message from Salt Lake, Utah, that a man answering Spencer's description was walking the streets there under surveillance as a narcotic law violator.

"Pick him up and hold him for me. Catching next train," Norfleet wired.

It was Spencer—at last. A haggard, sullen, shabby Spencer, defiantly insisting he was Mr. W. P. Hunt and clamoring for the right to plead guilty to "peddling dope."

Norfleet smiled wearily as he looked his old antagonist over, and said, "You know, Spencer, I never owned but one good overcoat in my life, and while I think of it I want to ask you what you did with it."

"Holy smoke, Frank, do you remember that?" the fugitive blurted. "What did you do with *my* coat, the one I left in your room that night in the Westbrook Hotel at Fort Worth? I saw you wearing it once in Florida, but I sure didn't have time to get it from you. Norfleet, you old fox, we beat you the first time but you've beaten us all the other times. The further I got you from home the nearer I got you to me. I'd rather die and go to blazes to-night than live as you have made me live. You and Phil Van Cise made me jump out of a hotel window the morning you raided us in Denver. Every knock on the door, every telephone ring, every stranger in the night, was *you*."

From the Salt Lake Telegram, October 2, 1923: "A four years' chase ended in Salt Lake Monday night for J. Frank Norfleet of Hale Center, Texas, when he visited the jail and identified Charles G. Harris, known in Salt Lake as W. P. Hunt, as W. B. Spencer, one of a gang of five bunco men that swindled him in

Texas in 1919. Two of the gang are dead and the other two are in prison. Hunt is the last man.

"When Norfleet confronted Hunt last night the latter denied acquaintanceship, but later said there was no use fighting his pursuer any longer, and before the conversation ended Hunt was calling his former victim by his first name.

" Hunt is charged here with violating the narcotic law."

Frank Norfleet's days of man-hunting were nearly done. He remained in Salt Lake for Spencer's trial. When the jury had received the plea of guilty and the court had imposed sentence of two years in Leavenworth penitentiary, Norfleet filed his Texas warrant with the warden and went home to bide his time.

"Some months later," he told recent listeners, "upon learning that a parole was about to be granted Spencer, I had the district attorney at Fort Worth sue out a writ of habeas corpus. The Leavenworth warden willingly loaned us Spencer. He was brought to Fort Worth for the March term of the district court and arraigned on my swindling charge. He fought the case bitterly with able counsel, but on the eighth day of March, this year, was convicted and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment in the Texas penitentiary. Texas will claim him upon the expiration of his term."

Norfleet sat in the editorial rooms of McCLURE'S MAGAZINE. The staff was gathered about him as the marvelous and dramatic story finally came to a conclusion.

"There was no profit in robbing me," he said slowly. "The Furey gang got $45,000 of my money. That's true. They made me spend $17,000 more running them down. For four years they disrupted my quiet life on my ranch. I have had to neglect my place. I have had to mortgage it heavily for funds to carry on. I am delinquent in the last interest payment, and at this moment I am in danger of losing a property worth $300,000 because I cannot meet the interest on a $60,000 debt. But look at *them:* two dead and three in the pen. Sixty-nine criminals have been brought to justice in four years through my chase of the five who robbed me. I have that satisfaction. I also have the satisfaction of knowing I have lived up to the creed of the West."

"What is the creed of the West, Frank?"

"My little daughter would tell you if she were here. She asked that same question while I was chasing Joe Furey, the day I dropped in on my family for Christmas dinner. I told her it was this: Treat the other fellow right, then make him treat you right."

THE SHAKESPEARE GARDEN

In Central Park

Heart-dear, we say—we have no higher praise
For this small garden climbing to the sun
Up a low hill, where loveliness has spun
A magic web, and peace forever stays.
Here all the little paths are wonder-ways
With beauty, and with fragrance overrun;
Here live again in happy unison
The flowers that Shakespeare loved in those far days.

Bird-Haunted is this spot, dream-haunted too,
There is no sound of tumult from the town,
But sometimes—in the stillness—dim shapes pass—
Ophelia, seeking rosemary and rue,
Puck, laughing where the sedge is turning brown,
Or Perdita, light dancing on the grass.

Imogen Clark.

"Right!" said Jimmy rising. "It's ten pounds, mind — cash on delivery."

THE PROTECTOR OF THE POOR

By PERCEVAL GIBBON

Illustrated by Harley Stivers

HE came forth from his apartment in Farr's Rents in his working-clothes—that is to say in a neat and decorous dinner suit, with his light overcoat folded over his arm. And on the very threshhold he encountered, barring his passage like a live mine in a channel, the bulk, the fighter's face and the terrific personality of Mrs. Pyke.

Jimmy Padden smiled at her sunnily. "Oh, hullo, Mrs. Pyke," he said. "I was just going out."

"I see you was," Mrs. Pyke replied with no answering geniality.

She was the rent collector for the

proprietors of Farr's Rents and other slum properties which lie inland from the splendor of Chelsea's river-front, the Friday terror of a hundred or so tiny two-roomed homes. Grossly fat, with a certain outward suave rotundity of contour, she had a faculty of flashing as though at will into a sort of maniac ecstasy of fury that was at the instant service of any shuddering defaulter in the week's rent.

She gazed at Jimmy now almost expressionlessly; and he was too wise in the ways of his world to give her time to become expressive.

"The rent, I 'spose?" he inquired.

"I'm in rather a hurry, Mrs. Pyke. D'you want it this minute?"

Mrs. Pyke nodded. "Tha's right," she agreed. "This minute! Cos I'm in rather a 'urry, too."

He could have sighed, but it was not in his part. He had the needful sum in his pocket at that moment, but it was the chief part of his working capital for the evening; and he had so little more that he had designed to give Mrs. Pyke the slip. Still, as there was no escape, he made it pay him the dividend of a gesture—the gesture of a gilded youth detained by an annoying beggar.

"Oh, all right!" he yielded, with an admirable manner of good-natured impatience. "Come in a minute, Mrs. Pyke. I'll find the rent-book."

He stepped back into the tiny slum-flat and Mrs. Pyke followed him as far as the doorway and stood there. She filled the entrance like a barricade, and there was something more than a seeming about her appearance of one whose dead body it would be needful to cross in order to gain an exit. She watched with her frozen eyes his pretence at rummaging here and there in the little parlor kitchen; she was a daunting and uninspiring audience for an actor like Jimmy.

"Ah, thought yer'd find it!" was her comment when he tired of his performance. "Yus!" as he counted out the silver coins into his hand. "Tha's right; you'll have to do with two or three drinks less this ev'nin', won't yer?"

She laughed shortly. Jimmy, game to the last, laughed too.

"I should have had to cash a check somewhere, anyhow," he said, concluding the gesture with a flourish.

"Cash a check—yus!" agreed Mrs. Pyke, with patent disbelief as she receipted the rent book. "Or pawn yer coat—which?"

She retired without farewells and the door of the little flat closed behind her with a slam. And then Padden did sigh.

He was a young man in the middle twenties, of medium height, medium figure, medium effect of personality. It was as though by taking thought he had shaped himself to a certain standard, to make himself indistinguishable from that type which comprises five out of ten of the men of his age who pass along any West End street.

He had the small tooth-brush moustache, the little dandified affectation of movement and attitude, even that shine of good humor and courage which plays upon the surface of the species. He lived the hardest life in the world—that of the non-specialized crook. He could not open a safe without its own key, forge a check, nor deal profitable cards. He had never picked a pocket nor owned a revolver. He was neither brave, strong nor clever. With the equipment only of a strictly average intelligence, he lived by his wits.

He counted the coins that were left to him; they amounted to about the cost of three cocktails with nothing, not even a bus-fare, left over. He would have to go on foot to the scene of his labors, and those labors would be cramped and hampered. For in Jimmy Padden's line of business, it is before all things needful that the practitioner should possess sufficiently the means of easy hospitality. "Have a drink with me," is the countersign that gains his admission to the opposite camp.

He shook his head thoughtfully, restored the coins to his pocket and pulled himself together. Like an actor arranging his part and demeanor ere he steps from the wings to the stage, he drew himself up, composed his face to a guise of nonchalant tranquility and pulled open his front door. And forthwith from the floor below he heard the great voice of Mrs. Pyke raised in the tone of one of her famous rages.

"None o' yer next week for *me* cos I knows yer!" detonated the terrible voice. "Paupers—that's wot you are! Time the lot o' you was in the gutter

where yer belongs! Now, look ere, Mister bloomin' Next Week——"

And so forth, ringing up and down the shabby staircase, echoing through the building, collecting an audience in the street without. Jimmy Padden, descending leisurely, came upon the scene of the uproar ere Mrs. Pyke was aware of him. She was standing, feet apart and hands upon her hips before such a door as his own, roaring down at a small shirt-sleeved man who cringed and trembled helplessly before her. It was the latter who saw Jimmy past the obscene bulk of his tormentor and raised slavish appealing eyes to his neat and prosperous-looking figure.

Jimmy knew him—a tailor's workman with a tendency to consumption and a rare gift for deference and humility. Farr's Rents rather prided itself upon Jimmy, his clothes and his manners—he answered perfectly to the local conception of a gentleman—but this man went further. He touched his hat to Jimmy and called him "sir;" he was nervously flattered at being noticed by him; he gave him the comfortable impression of having a feudal retainer. And in his imploring gaze now was also hope. He *knew* that Jimmy could help him—Jimmy with the price of those cocktails in his pocket for his whole worldly wealth!

Jimmy read his gaze accurately. It was a challenge he could not refuse.

"Why, hullo!" he said, and Mrs. Pyke whirled upon him. "What's all the row about?"

"Row?" shouted Mrs. Pyke. "Three weeks rent owin'—that's the row! An' the same old story over again—next week! Thinks as I'm goin' to stand it for ever, 'e does."

She laughed gruesomely, her huge face aflame.

The bent whisp of a man in the doorway coughed and spoke timidly.

"I bin out o' work for a month, sir," he quavered. "I done my best. 'Taint often I get behind with me rent."

"Once is often enough!" bellowed Mrs. Pyke. "Wot you got to do now is pay or get out!"

Jimmy struck in. "Oh, come, Mrs. Pyke!" he urged. "Give the poor beggar a chance! He's honest enough; he'll pay when he gets a job. You can't turn him and his family into the street."

"Can't I?" retorted Mrs. Pyke, bristling. "We'll see abaht that!"

"Well, give him till to-morrow, anyhow," said Jimmy; and then to the man: "Think you could raise the money by to-morrow, if Mrs. Pyke will wait till then?"

He himself always believed in the morrow and its fortunes. He was offering to the man a chance he would never have refused. But the other only hung his head despairfully. As Jimmy had said, he was honest enough and the next day had no hopes for him.

Mrs. Pyke laughed again. "Termorrer!" she jeered. "Look at 'im!"

"Well," said Jimmy, "I'll tell you what! You give him till to-morrow, and if he isn't ready for you then, I'll lend him the money myself. So you're safe enough, anyhow. How's that?"

He had his reward at once, in the sudden light of relief and confidence that glowed in the tailor's pinched face. Mrs. Pyke gathered her countenance into one huge sneer.

"*You'll* lend 'im the money!" she jeered. "And where'll you get it from?"

Jimmy smiled amusedly. "Same place as I got the rent I've just paid you, Mrs. Pyke," he answered, pleasantly. "There was nothing wrong with that, was there? And I told you I should have to cash a check this evening!"

"Yus, you *told* me," she retorted and turned to the man in the door. "Now if you ain't got it ready for me by this time to-morrer evenin'—Gorblimey, I will——" The battle was won.

Jimmy did not stay to hear it rumble itself to a close. "Well, I must be slippin' off!" he said. "I ought have been up West before this. So long!"

"Good evenin', sir!" cried the little man eagerly. Mrs. Pyke contributed a snarl, and Jimmy tripped his airy, sportive way down the stairs.

The walk from Chelsea to the heart of the West End is a pleasant one; a third of it is among the great houses that flock behind Buckingham Palace like clansmen behind a chieftain and another third is across St. James' Park, where the lovers kiss unabashed before the windows of Royalty. But it takes little less than an hour and for Jimmy that was the most valuable hour in the eve-

ning. At the end of it, men of the kind he sought would be leaving the cafés and the bars to go to dinner, whither he could not follow them; and the end of their dinners would bring them close to the hour when the drinking-places close and they would become inaccessible again in their clubs or their homes. He had no plan of campaign—only a sense of a driving emergency. To his own need for food and the profitable dissipation which is the goal of life for such as he, there was now added the almost greater need to live up to his promise to the consumptive tailor and confirm himself as the figure he had desired to present.

He came at last to the strong lights and the crowds of Piccadilly Circus and stood awhile on the curb to decide where he should go at first, an unimpeachable picture of a young man of ease and leisure. A questing taxi slowed beside him invitingly; he gazed at it for a couple of seconds as though making up his mind, then shook his head. The taxi moved on and Jimmy turned and walked towards Golconda. There was always a jam of people there and in the crowd he might even economise on cocktails.

The great room of the place, with its tarnished gilding, its plush and its mirrors, was fetid with smoke and human breath after the mild evening air of the street. Lines of marble-topped tables stretched away into the distance, each accommodating as many men and women as could crush themselves to a seat at it. In the aisles between the rows a slow current of folk moved restlessly, seeking for vacant places; white-aproned Italian waiters struggled to and fro with their trays. But what an observer more sensitive than Jimmy might have noticed was that in all that parched mass of pleasure-seekers, pleasure-sellers, money-spenders, crooks and fools, there was no note of gaiety or of lively enjoyment. It was as though they rehearsed a scene of which they were tired.

Jimmy paused within the door and surveyed the field. He saw possibilities. There were perhaps two to three hundred men present, and among so many there *must* be the one, unknown as yet, whom he sought. He joined the strollers among the tables, his overcoat on his arm, his shirt front well in evidence—his one social credential. A seat near him was suddenly vacant; but it was flanked on one side by a painted girl and on the other by a fat man with a beard; and he allowed it to be appropriated by a beaming old gentleman behind him.

Another seat became vacant when he had strolled the length of the room and half-way back again. He surveyed the neighborhood swiftly, strode forward just in time and laid a hand on the back of the empty chair. Opposite it, across the marble-topped table, lounged a young man whom he knew.

It was not that he had ever knowingly set eyes upon him before; but he knew him as effectually as though he had been introduced. A youth of Jimmy's own figure and general style, but some years younger, he might have been a silly subaltern wasting his leave or an undergraduate completing his education. His face, pleasant and ordinary enough, had already the brand of the apprentice debauché, the sag of the lines that are the outward index of a slack will. A half-full glass was before him on the table—not his first, by the glaze and uncertainty of his eyes.

Jimmy stood behind the empty chair and smiled down at him confidently. The other stared back doubtfully.

"Hullo!" said Jimmy. "Fancy running across you! I was just off!"

This was the kind of thing he could do consummately. The youth opposite suspected nothing; he moved awkwardly in his chair.

"Hullo!" he responded, cerebrating only too obviously in an endeavor to recall this polished and perfect product of the town. "Have a drink?"

Jimmy dropped into the empty chair. "Yes, I will," he answered cheerily. "Drink up yours and we'll have two of whatever it is—what? And what are you doing round here?"

The other emptied his glass and beckoned a waiter. "Two more!" he commanded and turned to answer Jimmy's question. "I've been here a week," he said. "Law business; the death duties and all that sort o' rot, don't you know. Still, it's better than mopin down in that cursed great barrack of a house in the country."

Jimmy nodded and smiled. This was enormously interesting. The waiter

brought the drinks, received a one-pound note—and went away to get change.

"Yes," he said. "Not much of a life for you, I sh'd think. Still—you'll be able to alter all that now!"

what you want and we can go along to your club afterwards."

Jimmy frowned as though in thought, while laughter and delight surged through him. At this moment the waiter returned and placed the change

"You'll lend 'im the money!" she jeered. "And where'll you get it from?"

"Rather!" agreed the other. "I say, what about a bit of dinner together presently?"

Jimmy shook his head. "No," he said. "I must go down to the club first; I want to cash a check."

"Oh, never mind that!" urged the youth. "Look here; I can let you have

upon the table. Still thinking deeply, Jimmy picked the money up, handed a shilling to the waiter and pocketed the rest. The half-drunken boy opposite to him noticed nothing.

"Well," said Jimmy at length, "if you'll promise to come along to the club afterwards, I don't mind, if you don't.

So if we're going to feed, we'd better be moving."

"Right-o!" agreed the prey and struggled to his feet.

He walked with the uncanny bee-line straightness of the drunken to the door, with Jimmy lounging along at his elbow. There was the usual throng of folk going in and out and as they made their way through, a hand took Jimmy by the elbow.

"A word with you," said the owner of the hand.

Jimmy called to his companion. "With you in a minute! Get a cab, will you?" He turned back into the great room and saw the man who had accosted him.

It was a burly man of middle age, with a heavy brown moustache streaked with grey and eyes shrewdly puckered at the corners. A bowler hat was pulled low on his forehead and his suit of blue serge had somehow the look of a garment neatly sawn out of a plank.

"I was watchin' you," he said briefly to Jimmy. "You know who that young feller is?"

"What on earth do you mean?" demanded Jimmy.

"He's young Lord Cleaves," the Scotland Yard man continued in a skilled undertone that carried just as far as his hearer and no further. "And now I've told you who he is, I'm goin' to tell him who you are. You've just got time to get out of sight."

Jimmy, eyes full on the other's face, nodded briskly, with an unchanged countenance. There are two entrances to the Golconda, and as the detective moved deliberately towards the one, he departed with speed by the other. And departing, he grinned; he was at any rate the richer by some fifteen shillings, the change of the one-pound note.

His next place of call was a blank, but he gave himself a drink and a sandwich and passed upon his way undaunted. And in a notorious bar near Leicester Square hope rose high again. A florid young man with a too-easy laugh and a vacant eye proved readily companionable and, under Jimmy's prompting, was sure he had met him before but could not remember precisely where. Neither could Jimmy, though he suggested several such possible meeting-places as the Royal Enclosure at Ascot, Ranelagh and Monte Carlo. It was after the mention of the last-named that Jimmy's new friend insisted upon standing him a bottle of champagne.

It was served to them at a small table in an alcove; and the florid young man paid for it from a sheaf of notes that made Jimmy's heart beat faster. It was when their glasses were full for the second time that the host became confident.

He leaned forward over the table.

"So you like a flutter, do you?" he said. "Roulette's all right for a lark; but did you ever do anything at chemin-de-fer?"

"Oh, yes," replied Jimmy.

His new acquaintance winked and grinned. Jimmy, a hideous doubt rising chill within him, watched him steadily.

"You come with me when this place closes," went on the other. "I'll put you right! I can steer you to the best little game in London. Plenty of liquor and a cheery gang of folks—you'll know a lot of 'em, I expect."

"H'm!" said Jimmy, considering him.

"It's safe too," the florid one assured him. "We've got the whole house and——"

"We!" repeated Jimmy.

The other nodded and grinned. "That's how I know all about it," he said. "I saw you were a sport as soon as you came in. Well, what about it?"

Jimmy rose wearily. He had entertained a demon unawares, wasting precious time over a practitioner in another branch of his own profession; and he felt sore.

"Get out of my way, you dirty tout!" he said and made his way forth.

A clock above a shop-front informed him that he had yet nearly an hour. He lit a cigarette and strolled thoughtfully. The choice of hunting-grounds now was not great and he chose the Regal more because it was near at hand than because it offered any very bright prospects. In its day it had been the headquarters of a showy Bohemianism, and even then it had a clientele among the short-haired girls and the long-haired men.

It was by no means full when he reached it. As soon as he entered a waiter drew out a chair for him. "I'm

looking for a friend," Jimmy said, declining it and passed on. But there was nothing of promise in sight and presently he seated himself and ordered a drink. The memory of his promise and also—for even the Jimmy Paddens have their partially-redeeming softness—of the little shuddering tailor-man, humble and helpless and trustful, were heavy upon him. He had neither honor nor worth; but in his thought of that meagre admirer, he was ready to do murder for a five-pound note.

A man whose evening clothes hung loose upon him, baggy and fitless and grotesque, went past him and dumped himself heavily into a chair at the next table. By the mere habit of his trade, Jimmy thrust his private thoughts from him and took stock of the newcomer. He heard him order brandy, a little breathlessly, like a man in dire need and then, as he turned, beheld his face and forthwith comprehended utterly.

He had seen just such ruined marks before—the parched skin, white lips, eyes whose mere human regard was quenched in agony; the twitch and quiver that played ceaselessly, like a moving shadow, from one feature to another. He estimated the man's condition acutely; he knew—not from experience but from the accounts of others—that the man's whole physical and nervous being was in torture. He was starving—starving to madness for the need of his vicious food. He would sell the soul he had lost and the manhood he had murdered for a pinch of white powder.

"By Jove!" said Jimmy to himself and took stock of the man in other respects. His studs were pearls; his cuff-links were all that could be desired. He waved away the change for the money with which he paid for his drink.

Jimmy considered. *This* was a certainty, if only he had been able to get a supply of the drug. But dope had so far played no part in his young life; he knew nothing of its sources of supply. It looked for a while as though this gold-mine would have to be abandoned. But Jimmy knew that ideas sometimes rained on him from the empty sky. He waited receptively.

He was rewarded startlingly. "Stung by the splendor of a sudden thought," he almost laughed aloud. "Got him!" he ejaculated under his breath.

He finished his drink, rose, and passed deliberately to the next table and sat down opposite the wretched, poison-crazed creature there.

"Would you like to meet me in the cloak-room in ten minutes?" he asked.

The other man gaping, looked up. "What—what d' you mean?"

Jimmy, holding his victim's eyes, replied with a piece of cautious pantomime. He lifted the back of his wrist to his nose and sniffed at it, first with one nostril and then with the other. "It'll cost you ten pounds," he added.

The drug-fiend stared at him. For some moments his face ceased to twitch.

"Cloak-room—ten minutes!" he repeated. "Yes, I'll come," he babbled. "Hurry, man, hurry! I'll wait for you with the money."

"Right!" said Jimmy, rising. "It's ten pounds, mind—cash on delivery."

At a near-by chemist's, which he knew he should find open, he made his request.

"Heart-burn," he remarked. "I want some bicarbonate of soda."

"Take it now?" queried the other.

"No, thanks!" said Jimmy, and received a paper envelope. "But I can't carry this in my pocket. Let me have a pill-box, will you? How much is it?"

"Three-pence!"

He found his man waiting avidly at the entry to the room where the long coat-burdened racks made screens for an easy privacy.

"Have you got it? Have you got it?" he flustered painfully. The minutes of waiting had spurred his appetite.

Jimmy nodded and showed the pill-box in his hand. "Come behind here," he said and led the way behind a curtain of coats. "Where's that ten pounds?"

"Here they are!" And at last the actual money, the wages of sin, the price of the redemption of the little tailor, was in Jimmy's hand.

"Now don't start taking it here!" warned Jimmy,, passing over the pil-box with its innocuous freight. "Here's some people coming, too."

"All right; all right!" agreed the other.

Jimmy turned to go. But a group of three or four men had arrived and were looking for coats. Chatting and laughing among themselves, they barred him in with his victim.

He cast a nervous glance backwards. The miserable wreck had not been able to wait. Even as Jimmy looked he saw him tap out a pinch of that innocent foundation of baking-powder, inhale it in two great breaths, and raise his face with the eyes closed to wait for the moment of rapture and relief.

Jimmy knew himself in the presence of an ugly emergency. Closing-time had come; more men were hemming him in; to crush forcibly through them would be to invoke the hue and cry. Expedients flashed through his mind—a flat denial—pretence of a practical joke—denunciation of the victim! He was not decided when he got the surprise of his life.

The drug-fiend opened his eyes with a deep sigh and the death-like ruin of his face was of a sudden vivid with new life. His very body seemed to inflate within his slack clothes. What had happened to him was what Jimmy had seen happen to other cocaine-slaves when the drug restored as a loan that which it had exacted as a price. He smiled at Jimmy and winked.

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Jimmy, who had never heard of self-hypnotism or faith-cures. "That chemist must have made a pretty expensive mistake. Threepence—for ten pounds worth!"

He watched his customer depart, walking briskly, a new man for the time being.

"Anyhow—I'll have a cab home," said Jimmy. "I've earned that!"

But as he drove westward towards the domesticity of Farr's Rents, his thoughts took another turn.

"Poor little beggar," he mused. "He'd starve himself and his family to pay me back. I'm dashed if I don't make him a present of his bloomin' rent. And it'll look well, too!"

THE DEVON ROAD

One blustry, bleak November day,
To Salcombe town I made my way.
It mattered not that skies were gray,
  For close beside me strode
My sailor lad, then seaward bound;
He promised to return, renowned,
And drive me Sundays, silken-gowned,
  Along the Devon road.

Though singing airs of early June,
The earth is strangely out of tune.
The waters hum a minor croon
  Since over him they've flowed.
New life is fair on hedge and tree,
But oh, my bitter misery
At every lad and lass I see
  Along the Devon road.

Helen D. Mallen.

HEIGHTS

Episodes in the Life of a Brave Woman

By

ALICE CUTTING PHELPS

"Wasn't she worth saving, Mr. McClure?"
(Quotation from the author's letter.)

THERE isn't any plot to this story, it is simply the writing down of events that led to where I stand today. There is always a dynamic force at my back forever pushing me on. Just when I think I have plumbed the depths of my own soul, some one measures it a little deeper; and when I think the heights are reached, I am astonished to find it is night and the full day brings me trails to climb that lead farther up to sunlit patches.

I was ten when my brother Claire was born. He was the first lovely thing I can remember. Christmases and birthdays and all other events before that time have faded. He was born on a Sunday morning. My father was home from work and he was fixing some casters on mother's flour box. The flour box was blue outside to match the woodwork in the pantry, but the inside was snowy white. Everything seemed so very still. I had never known Sunday quite so still. My grandmother, who had come the night before, tiptoed about. Father told me, after he had finished the flour box, that if I were very still, I might go up and see mother.

When I went in to see her—there she was, her beautiful golden hair spread out on the pillow, and her lovely, lovely hands stretched out to me. She looked just like an angel. Then the baby was put in my arms and the age-old mother love flooded my heart.

As soon as I was old enough to go out of the yard, I went from street to street looking for little boys and girls who needed clothes or food. I was much worse than my brothers who brought home puppies and kittens. Unblushingly I invited the most forlorn youngsters to stay for dinner or supper. We had dinner and supper in those days. I could always find something lovely about them; their hair or their eyes. Sometimes it was their voices which thrilled me until I was in ecstasy over discovering them. There were always extra clothes I could fix for them, and there seemed never to be a lack of baskets to put food in. I was about twelve when I started on this trail. My young feet danced all the way. I was never tired—life had just started.

I was fourteen the summer I went up to Stockton, New York, to visit my Aunt Hattie and my Grandmother Hill. What a very little girl one was at fourteen, thirty years ago! My uncle was a doctor. I supposed then he was the most wonderful doctor in all the world. He had a green-covered oilcloth lounge in his office which I used to sit on. The head of the lounge was quite high and I climbed up there and slid the whole length with my bare feet on the cold oilcloth. Once I imagined the reason it was so cold was because of all the dead people who had lain on it. After that I didn't slide on it any more.

There was a lovely little stream running through my aunt's place and a bridge close by. I used to love to hear the horses cross and the boards rattle. My grandmother lived only a short distance up this stream in a lovely old white house with green blinds and great maple trees out in the yard. Every morning I went down to my Aunt Hattie's along this stream. When I got there I wiped the dishes for her. And then the most important part of the work was to clean her brass teakettle. She kept a lemon and a dish of salt for the purpose and I was allowed to make that beautiful brass teakettle shine. I was never still an instant those days and how I danced around that shining teakettle! Every light and color was reflected in it—my eyes, my hair—which was long and as yellow as the shining yellow thing I loved to work on—my dress, Aunt Hattie moving quietly about the room, leaves on the trees reflecting through the open windows. When it was done I was indeed turned into a joyous sprite.

I always rushed to the pantry and got a slice of bread, not to eat, bless you, but to say my prayers with, alone. Back to grandmother's I'd go, along the stream. Every now and then I would stop and, breaking off the bread, say, "Cast your bread upon the waters, and after many days it will be returned to you." I knew exactly what it meant, as well then as now. I knew it meant blessings and kindness and love, not bread made from flour. But like a rosary, the bread in my hand made me remember God more plainly. I used very small pieces of bread to cast into the water that my small morning service alone with God would last.

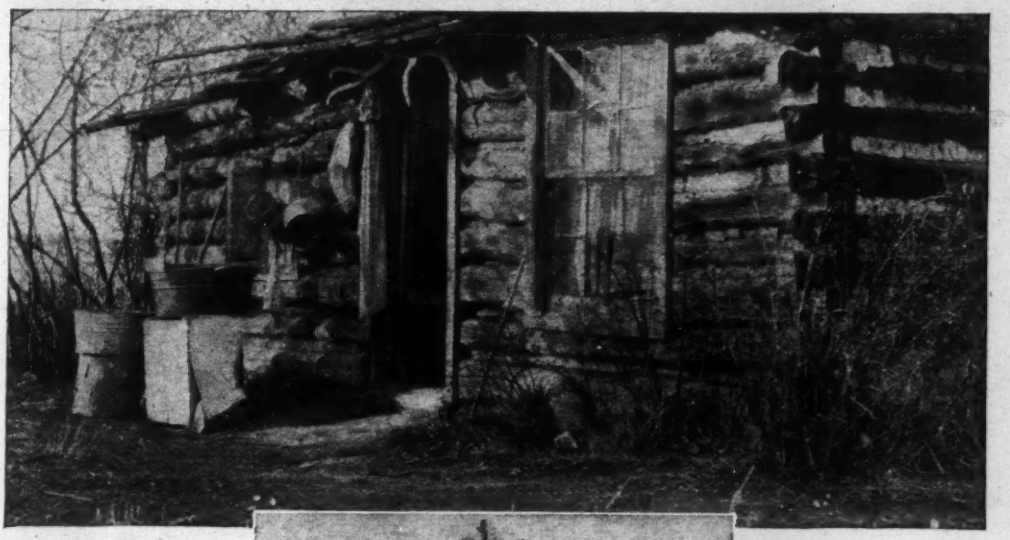
The rest of the day I used up until not one merry minute was wasted. I loved every tree, every flower, every single blade of grass, and the birds and clouds and wind.

One night a woman was very sick somewhere in the village and my grandma had to go with my doctor uncle. There was no one to stay with me so I had to go also. It was very late when we got back, but I seemed never to have been sleepy. Everything was so still. Walking along I touched each tree. I remember stopping and asking grandmother if she didn't feel sure that the trees slept.

After an instant she said, "Yes, dear, I feel sure they do." All these long years that has been a lovely memory to me, that night and that thought. Going through the yard I picked an armfull of old fashioned cinnamon roses, fresh with dew. That night I felt the first awakening of mystical things. The whole universe seemed peopled with unseen life that I could not touch or explain, but knew was there. A companionship with everything was sealed. Little girls live in a strange world which grown-ups seldom venture into. It is not without wisdom either. Since I have passed out of this kingdom it is only through closed doors that I am even allowed to glimpse the lovely things of my little girlhood.

One night my father sat on the porch smoking. I felt somehow as if my heart would burst with love and happiness that night, and as I sat in the hammock near him I sang. Every bit of my soul was loose and I sang loud and clear and sweet, my young voice rising on the very wings of the night. I don't think I ever sang like that before and I am sure I never did again. I was taken very sick the next day and could not go back to school. And in one short month my beloved father died. Then it was that the climb up the trail began.

Mother and the boys and I left our home town and went to live in the little town of Stockton, New York. We took our things with us, that is all our home things, and lived for the first time in my life on a small farm just out of the village. The first winter after father died was one of the coldest and longest winters in years. I remember how it snowed, and it certainly can snow in the Chautauqua hills.



Mary Cutting Phelps— the author. Above, the log cabin on the Hutton Ranch.

I had gone up town for the mail early one afternoon and was going to stay for evening service at church. After church I started home alone. I don't think I was ever so cold in my life. Before I had gone far, I saw I would never be able to get home. I was walking and alone and it was certainly very dark.

After wallowing through the snow for nearly half an hour, I started back toward town. It seemed to me that every light in Stockton was out except away up at the end of town at Uncle Milton Lamphere's, and I made up my mind to go to that light. It was nearly midnight when I got there. After getting good and warm I went upstairs to bed. There were red wool blankets on the bed and I slept in a red flannel nightgown. I gave one short thought to the fact that I would have to dress in that cold room in the morning, then suddenly I was warm and asleep.

I was twenty-four when I found my man. I knew I loved him the instant I saw him. We were both in California and it was spring and we were young, and life held a whole world of hidden experiences. He was strong and fine and sweet. In the fall we were married. The next year our beautiful little baby boy was born to us.

I said to Charley that day when I first saw our baby, "Just think, Charley, he's ours and no one can take him away from us."

We lived in Riverside, California, then, and had the dearest little cottage.

Rose-bushes fenced in our yard. We were doing well and only God knows how happy we were.

One day the mail carrier brought us a letter from Oklahoma. We could not imagine who lived there that we knew. On opening it, you may believe we were surprised to find it was from Charley's father. He had gone to Oklahoma and taken up a claim or homestead, and he wanted us to come out there and get a claim for ourselves. No one on earth knows how I hate that word claim. It stands for the beginning of all the trouble we have ever had and the cause of all our heart-break and sorrow.

We were young and full of hope and ambitions and after careful consideration we thought that it would be all right to go. Our boy was three months old, a big fine, lovely baby, and it was for him we planned our home. So we took up our claim, built a dugout of one room, with a dirt floor, three small windows and a door coming down into the dugout. We went over to our claim from Charley's father's place on Good Friday.

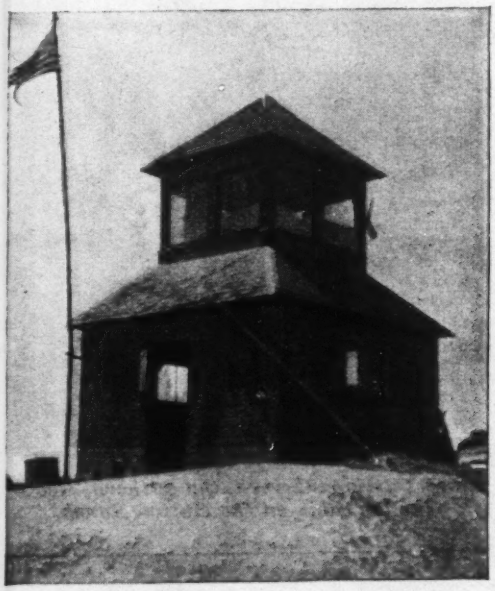
I remember we only had a few quilts, an empty straw tick, our trunk and ourselves in an old buggy they loaned us. That dugout seemed to me nothing but a hole in the ground, I can tell you. We went across the road to a neighbor and filled our straw tick. I made a bed on the floor. Charley went to a little store three miles away and bought a stove, a little tin thing, and enough dishes to manage with. We used our trunk for a table. Baby was four months old then and took it all as a joke. Charley began plowing and I began making a home.

We never had half enough to eat and I got thinner and thinner every day. So did Charley, and before our eyes our baby began to fade and die. He grew each day more lovely; his beautiful head was covered with curls of gold and his eyes were like stars. I knew he was dying, each day I saw it and felt it, but we were all caught in a trap, Charley and I and our precious baby. Our crops failed from drought and then our baby died.

Oh, dear God, it seemed to us then and seems to us now as if nothing could ever happen again that could hurt us so—what did that desolate homestead amount to, and that dugout was indeed nothing but a hole in the ground. I hated even the merry little sunbeam my baby left across the dirt floor when he slipped away from us.

The next year we left Oklahoma and went to southern Illinois. Charles, Junior, was born—new hope came to us, but old troubles always kept us down.

Charley rented a little house and did his farming in the bottom lands. We would get up at three-thirty in the morning and Charley would drive nine miles and put in corn. Four years in succession drought took our crops. Charley had malaria fever, little Charles had typhoid fever—I alone kept up, I don't know how I did it. Some unseen help continually pushed me on.



The fire station on Mt. Hood where Mr. Phelps is ever on guard.

I wrote short little articles for the Woman's Page of the Farmer's Review, making two or three dollars every once in a while. Then one day I wrote The Garden Across the Street, published in the October Ladies' World by The McClure Publications, Incorporated, and got $75.00 for it.

The day I got the check was a scorch-

ing hot day in August. Charley was cutting sprouts in a small patch of corn that had twisted its blades into grotesque forms about their stalks, from the heat. When I opened the letter and saw the check, I fell on my knees and cried and prayed and prayed and cried. Then I went out to Charley and told him. Only those who have been hungry for years and almost naked can imagine what that meant to us.

That was in August, 1914. The same year The Letters of a Woman Homesteader were published in the Atlantic Monthly. I had the privilege of reading them. I wondered whatever in the world we would do when winter came and the seventy-five dollars were gone. I thought about it day and night while Charley was working like a dog. I never said a word to Charley, but I wrote to Burntfork, Wyoming, to find out if there were any ranches out there one could lease. In reply I received a letter saying that a Mr. John Hutton of Green River, Wyoming, had a ranch to lease, so I wrote him, never saying a word to Charley about it.

Mrs. Hutton wrote me a wonderful letter in reply, saying Mr. Hutton was deputy sheriff of Sweetwater County, Wyoming and a very busy man. But she told us to come, saying they would furnish everything and give us half the crops. When I showed her letter to Charley, he was willing to go.

On the eighth of September we hitched up a team of little white horses to a small light wagon for which I traded my incubator. With but ten dollars to our name after paying our debts, we started on the long gray road. We had not the remotest idea of the outcome, and not even a road map to direct us. In our wagon we had our bed—a few slats across the over-jut of the wagon held our feather bed—a two-burner gasoline stove, our trunk and a few dishes. Charles, Junior, was nearly five years old.

It was one year in a hundred because we went across the Red Desert in November and had gorgeous weather. Usually it storms and frightful blizzards fly their banners at that time of year.

We got through to Green River, Wyoming, in nine weeks and one day. It was a wonderful trip. It took the best that was in us, pluck, courage and all our strength. Charley got work in Green River that winter. I worked in the Green River Hotel as chambermaid and helped Mrs. Hutton, who ran it. The Huttons were perfectly lovely to us. In March we went out to the ranch at Burntfork. There are many ranches out there but only one "The Ranch" and that is the Hutton ranch.

Mr. Hutton built us a new house. There is also a three-room cabin on the ranch which was built of fine big logs a good many years ago. It is only nine logs high but it is cool in summer and warm in winter. It faces the south and a few steps from the door Birch Creek flows by, cold and clear and pure, straight from the mountain springs of the Uinta forests. Along the creek in spring flowers of every color grow. Birch and willow bend their lovely heads to shadow the pools. In summer we always lived in the cabin; in winter in the new house, as we called the frame

Max Bentley is making a tour of Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas and Louisiana, getting first-hand information of the doings of the Ku Klux Klan. His first article will appear in McCLURE'S MAGAZINE for September.

house. Facing east, it looked out on thirty acres of alfalfa.

From the new house one had a glorious view of wonderful Philopeko Mountain. There never was a mountain like her. She is not snow-crowned as are her brothers across the lower range, but she is lovely. The wind woos her in the daytime, and at night the stars come down and kiss her. The moon is always an ardent lover. From her feet to her crown she is beautiful. I never saw such colors; I never dreamed such beauty as she shows could be. She brings out the best of a man's or woman's soul. I am not there now, but I have a great longing to see her and feel her peace. She is mine and always will be; as long as I live she will be mine, standing in the same place, radiant in all her splendor. I can love her in my heart, knowing no one can take one tiny spark of her love away from me. I have seen her in all her moods, in all weathers and all lights and she is always covered with beauty. I should love to lie folded in her arms when my time comes to become dust.

Charles, Junior, was only five when we were first on the ranch. He was such a dear little boy. He had a little red hat and when he played out in the meadow—the alfalfa was almost as high as he was—I would go out to find him and see his little red hat bobbing up and down through the purple blossoms.

One day he came into the house, his eyes shining and his cheeks red. "Oh, mother, do come and see," he said, "God has opened his gates and you can see right in." Going to the door I saw a wonderful sunset, the sun going down on a path of its own making.

We worked hard that first summer in Wyoming, fixing up the ranch, making fences, putting up the hay and getting settled in every way. We had to adjust ourselves to an entirely strange country and new conditions. Our neighbors, with the exception of one or two, were from ten to fifteen miles apart. The spring soon passed to summer and, when the hay was up, there came that year a sort of settling down that made us just a bit homesick. Charley fished and hunted and I did such homekeeping as I could. Even with it all, there seemed after the long hard years to be a reaching out, feeling for something greater than we had yet accomplished.

When I was first married, before Vernon was born, a very strange thing happened to me. As it led up to the direct events that took place that fall, I'll tell you about it. I cannot explain it, but it is true exactly as I am writing it down. One evening when I was walking on the street in Riverside, thinking about almost nothing—just walking along—suddenly I felt a little girl skip up by my side and slip her hand in mine. I thought instantly that it was some neighbor's little girl. When I looked down she let go of my hand, gave a funny little giggle and skipped on ahead with dancing feet. Looking back with merry twinkling eyes, she disappeared into the gathering dusk. I never gave it another thought—some little girl who knew me was playing a little joke. But several days after that, when I was in the yard at home, she came again and leaned against me and gave that funny little giggle. When I turned to see, thinking I could find out who she was, she left just as suddenly.

After that she came almost every day. My dream girl, I call her. She wore a little white dress, always, with yellow butter-cups embroidered on the bottom. She was not pretty, but she was adorable. I could never touch her, but just as sure as I know that there is a God, I knew she was there.

At first she would never come into the house, but suddenly when I was making the tiny garments I was soon to need, she stood in the door, her adorable, kissable mouth twisted into a funny little bow, and I heard that silly little giggle of hers. Then later she would slip in and sit on the arm of my chair and lay her head on my shoulder. If I moved, she was gone.

When the time came for me to go down into the "valley" after my baby, I kept thinking all through that night that I hoped it would be she whom I would bring back. All night she danced about coaxing me on when I knew I was sinking. After Vernon died she came again and then for years she did not come any more.

That fall in Wyoming I sat sewing one evening, when suddenly in the quiet room I heard that childish giggle, just as of old, and there she was. After that, when I was out with Charles, Jun-

ior, picking gooseberries along the streams, she would come as in the old days.

Surely, I thought, something is meant by this vision I see; so I told Charley we would be as saving as we could and get a little homeless girl and take care of her. Charley thought it would be nice for Charles, Junior, to have some one near his age. I was expecting the stork again, but that didn't matter to us.

We applied to the Children's Home Society of Wyoming, and on the 28th of October we got a letter from Miss Allie Jewell, saying she had a little girl the age we wanted. She sent us the proper papers to sign and told us to set a date to go into Green River after her. On the 10th of November, Charley went for her.

Hazel as she is to-day at sixteen.

There are no words in the English language to tell about her or the fiendish abuse she had received from her own father. He had taken her from her mother when she was only four years old and walked from Portland, Oregon, to Casper, Wyoming, making her carry a pack on her back and had starved and abused her all those years. She was six years old and had never had a dress on until we got her; she had always worn overalls, and old pieces of gunny sacks on her poor little feet. I never saw such a starved, frightened child in my life. Every joy of motherhood and every trouble also were opened up to me, and I was busy. We turned her loose, feeding her all we could, doctoring her all winter, and I began to cut down everything I owned to make her clothes and have her look pretty, until one day Charley said, "Be sure, Alice, to save one dress to wear, anyway." He was only joking, because if he could he would have cut up his clothes for her. We were so glad of her and so sorry for her.

Things began to happen the day we brought Hazel home. Life was growing, tremendous clouds in our sky were gathering, my trail was getting steeper and steeper up the mountain and I was getting to a place where I would stand and look down in a dazed, breathless sort of way.

Then it was that I began to stand each morning and, looking at the mountains, say, "Speak, Lord; thy servant heareth." A renewed strength was given me each day to go on or God knows I would have failed.

On the afternoon of November twentieth, ten days after Hazel's arrival, it began to storm. Charley went to Burntfork for the mail. When he came home it was snowing a fine dry snow, like sugar, which burned your face as it whipped against it. By dark it was

twenty-two degrees below zero and blowing a perfect gale. After supper, when the children were in bed, Charley and I sat reading. It was about eight o'clock when we heard some one fall into the house. He was a man about twenty years old, nearly frozen to death.

He turned at once to me and said, "My wife is taken sick suddenly and I want you to come right over. I started out hunting somebody and saw your light, so stopped here." Big things happen just that way, you know, quick and sharp, taking our breath away. Just as suddenly as he had come, we got ready to go with him. I woke up the two sleeping children and told them we had to go away and bade them not touch the stove and to stay in bed. I fixed the fire and left the door unlocked. By then Charley was in from the barn with two saddle horses.

I am telling you the truth when I say I forgot entirely about myself, forgot I was pregnant, forgot I had a precious life to protect; only the urge to get to that sick girl called me. If Charley thought of it at all, he thought of it the same way I did—in a vague way outside the minutes' happenings. Soon we were facing that bitter storm in pitch darkness. Don't think I didn't suffer; every jolt over that awful trail was misery which brought sweat to my face. I bit my lips until they were bleeding when I got to their house, which proved to be seven long miles along the Uinta Range of mountains, over the worst trail I ever rode.

When we got there the fire was out and there was no lamp in the house. Charley made a fire and we got hot water ready. She, his young girl-wife, was almost dead. She lived only a few hours, but she was brave. Once she looked up and smiled and when I leaned over her she put her lovely young arms around my neck.

There wasn't one stitch to put on the baby, a fine boy. By the light of the fire I made a band, a tiny shirt and a slip out of a big full gray flannel underskirt I had on, using number thirty black thread. At daylight we wrapped the baby in an old quilt and went home.

The children were both awake and they were wild with joy over the baby. There was that much joy over his birth, anyway.

After breakfast I found some clean underclothes and a simple white dress I had had for years. I took these and wrapped them up and again I took the long trail over to the lonely homestead cabin. I washed and dressed the dead girl-mother and got her all ready for her long sleep, doing it alone.

For several days after it was over I seemed to be in a sort of stupor. On the fifth day my own baby, a little girl, was born dead. Charley made a little box and during a blinding snowstorm, with bitter tears, he alone buried her. Our sacrifice to duty and to humanity, I guess. I was sick for nine long weeks. Charley took care of baby Donald, little Charles, Hazel and me, and did the ranch work. I never knew a man like him.

Spring came and suddenly the beautiful tender green of the aspens danced in among the pines in the mountains, columbines raised their slender, exquisite heads, blue anemones dotted the stony, rocky mountain sides, birch and willow leafed out, and over all was the glorious light that only Wyoming has. His father gave Donald to me. Those days we were so poor we could hardly buy a sack of flour, but oh I wanted him—was he not heart of my heart?

One day in May I tucked Donald under my arm and Hazel, Charles and I, with knives and pails, set out to dig dandelion greens.

We were full of glee, each trying to find the most, when suddenly Hazel said to me, "Oh, mama, do look over there; there is a tent. Sure enough, about a mile away like a far off sail on a boat, was a speck of white which we guessed was a new homestead settler.

"Oh, goody, goody," we cried, "neighbors, just think!" So we started down to call, because in Burntfork, Wyoming, all are neighbors and all are friends.

When we got there we found that a family by the name of Brown had taken up a homestead. Mrs. Brown was a perfectly delightful young woman, the mother of three little girls, and soon to become a mother again. The tent was small and crowded and already in May was hot and stuffy. Mr. Brown had gone to Lyman, Wyoming, after flour and provisions, she told us. We stayed quite a while before going home.

We had lots of good milk and almost every day after that one of the little girls would come over after milk. The last of June, I said to Charley, "Let us bring the Brown family over here to the ranch, and they can live in the cabin until after the arrival of the baby." So he took our team and wagon and they moved over into the cabin. We had a lovely summer.

On the sixth of September "Boy Brown" was born. Mr. Brown went in one direction after help and Charley went in the other and while they were gone the baby boy came. I was alone with her; everything went fine and when all the force arrived they were surprised to see a fine boy all washed and dressed and Mrs. Brown sleeping. The rest of the youngsters were up at our house eating their breakfast.

Do you remember Lillian D. Wald's fine book, The House on Henry Street, which ran serially in the Atlantic Monthly? I was very, very much interested in her and her splendid work. Beside that, another baby had been born in my neighborhood and the mother had died from lack of care and a doctor. A sort of sharp fear had stabbed me—what is going to happen in this fine valley if our babies die or our mothers die? I wrote to Miss Wald and told her about Donald, about Mrs. Brown and the other mother who died, as well as about my fears for myself.

She was interested and wrote Miss Julia C. Lathrop who was then chief of our Children's Bureau. Miss Lathrop wrote me at once, saying she was very much interested in my letter and asking if she might have it published; that it spoke for all the mothers crying for help in our remote districts. Miss Lathrop also asked if she might send a doctor out to Burntfork, Wyoming, to see me. You may be sure I was glad and thankful that I had awakened so much interest.

Not long after that, Miss Lathrop sent Dr. Caroline Hedger, then with the Children's Bureau of Chicago, out to our home. Dr. Hedger is one of the most famous doctors in the United States and one of the dearest women in the world. She stayed nearly a week and found things just as I had described them.

The next May my baby Ledlie was born in the Rock Springs Hospital and Miss Lathrop paid all my expenses. When Ledlie was four months old, we had a baby conference at our Burntfork schoolhouse. It was a wonderful getting together of mothers and babies. Dr. Grace L. Meigs of Chicago, Dr. Anna Rude of San Francisco and a government nurse, Mrs. Bartlett, were there. Soon after that the maternity bill was passed and now there are county nurses throughout the state of Wyoming.

Debts and poverty were again crowding Charley and me against a stone wall and I decided again to "take the bull by the horns," as they say in Wyoming. I have a very, very dear friend, so precious to me that only she and I can measure the depth—Mrs. Annabel Berry of Newport, Rhode Island. I have been writing to her for years, especially during our covered wagon trip out to Wyoming. She had saved all my letters for some reason of her own. She wrote me that she had great hopes that I would write up our wagon trip. Now that I had so many little folks, I decided to do so. So I wrote the story from beginning to end.

I decided to send it to the Woman's Home Companion. Mrs. Laura Spencer Pope wrote me one of the finest letters it has ever been my privilege to read, let alone receive. She said she was sure that The Butterick Publishing Company would take it, and that as soon as Mrs. Willsie, who was then editor of the Delineator, returned, she would send it to her. She told me the story was wonderful. Shortly after that I received a letter from Mrs. Honoré Willsie saying the same thing—that it was wonderful and that she could not think of refusing it. She paid me five hundred dollars for it.

That was the March before we entered the World War. I paid what we owed and Charley bought cattle with the rest. Then came the war. That winter in Wyoming was the coldest, hardest, worst winter the ranchers ever knew. We took our cattle through the hard winter and thought that we were saved, but in May all but four cows died from weakness and the long, hard winter. There we were, the last dollar of the five hundred gone, all but four cows dead.

I never thought of such a thing as crying—every tear had been burned up in my soul years before. But when you

are cast in a certain lot and it finally dawns on you that your life is a continual see-saw, you had just as well get busy balancing up your end part of the time, and that is what we did. We simply could not buy a Liberty Bond, we couldn't even buy our breakfast.

I told Charley that we must do something to help the suffering. I went to our merchant and told him just how things were. I bought one hundred and fifty dollars' worth of material and began to cut and sew and I made twelve baby layettes. The rest of the goods was made into children's clothes and sent to suffering France. The baby clothes I made as well as I could, mostly by hand, as if they were for my own babies.

The Butterick Publishing Company was doing some wonderful work "over there" and Mrs. Mabel Potter Daggett was sent to France by them. She took one of the nicest layettes with her in her trunk. If you will read in the Delineator of April, 1920, you will see, on page 19, a little story, At The Villa De LaGaiete by Mrs. Daggett, in which she tells about the young mother who received it. Mrs. Willsie told me that she sent out for tissue paper and covered one of the seats in the big Butterick reception room and laid out all the little clothes and that all the Delineator force came in to see them. How little I dreamed so much would have been thought of them when, on my kitchen table in far away Burntfork, I sorted and packed the little garments and wrote the letter.

The Letters of a Woman Homesteader by Eleanor Pruitt Stewart, published in 1914, should have made Burntfork famous, but they didn't. A few people came out there in the summer of 1915, but that was the end of tourists. One need only see Burntfork, Wyoming, to love it. It lies like a priceless gem in a green valley. Burntfork valley from the mesa runs north and south, then suddenly and almost mysteriously the valley turns and lies west to the setting sun. The great Bald Mountains, always snow-topped, with Gilbert's Peak of fifteen thousand feet, rise to the west, and the beautiful Uinta range edge the Bald Mountains like fringe on "milady's shawl."

And the people—they are the best and dearest people in the world! Mrs. Willsie said to me, "Mrs. Phelps, when you get courage enough, write up the Morals of the Cattle Country—it will make you a millionaire." When I do, I'll start with my own dear Burntfork Valley folks because they will be an example for all to follow. Since that winter of 1920 I have been east and west and I have stood appalled and shocked at the pace we are going. I should much rather write up The Morals of the Cattle Country than The Morals of the Rest of the World.

The children reached an age when they had to be close to a good school. So we borrowed the money and went to Oregon. When we first got there, Charley rented a ten acre place with berries on it.

I have a friend in New York who has a brother in Portland, Oregon. I didn't have the remotest idea what he did or what his business was, but my friend wrote me that she was going to write him and see if he would get work for Charley. As I knew his address I wrote asking him if he knew of any work in Portland. You may be sure I was surprised to learn that he was a famous federal lawyer for the Forest Service, from Washington, D. C. He wrote back to me at once that he would get work for Charley very soon in the Forest Service in the Oregon National Forest.

Charley went to work May first and through May and June he worked at maintenance work. By July first they needed a man on top of Mt. Hood as fire lookout, the most important fire station in the National Forest. They picked Charley to go up. He has been there two years now and goes up again this year on July first. He has, indeed, reached the top of one mountain, hasn't he? Somehow, his wonderful strength of character, his steadfastness under all troubles gives me courage to go up my mountain. He has made good in everything he ever undertook.

Whenever any of you climb our wonderful mountain, Mt. Hood, just tell him you knew he was there and see his eyes light up and his jolly smile. When you pass through our little village of Sandy, Oregon, just before you reach the National Forest, stop and say "Hello" to us. We, the children and I, live there while he is up on top. There are all kinds of trails to climb.

It seems to me I have been climbing

for years. I would give anything in the world to have one month free from worry and climbing, while I sat by the wayside and rested. But one cannot do that, because always ahead are the sunlit patches to be reached, and we never attain any height worth climbing without the hardest struggles. The valleys of life are very lovely, but from the high places one has such a chance to stand and look over into the valleys just left that surely, after all, it is worth trying for.

Last summer two thousand and eighty-one people climbed Mt. Hood. It is a wonderful mountain and from the top one has a glorious view of our Columbia River with all its mystical bends and exquisite expanse. To the east lie thousands of acres of fruit and grain and to the west the magnificent National Forest. Around Mt. Hood is one of the finest highways in the world. Lovely parks and trails, game and fish await all of you in the East and West and North and South who wish to come to test our hospitality—I assure you Oregon welcomes you all.

And away up on top of Mt. Hood, always on duty, you will find my husband. He will welcome you on top. And away down in a little humble cottage in Sandy, you will find the children and me and we will welcome you, one and all, to Oregon. We are all climbers and we will all reach the top.

As I have said, there is no plot to this story, but it is written first because I wanted to stop long enough to look back into the valleys and more because I wanted to tell all who have the eternal climb, climb, climb before them that there is a top to be reached at last. I have met every sacrifice that could be asked of a woman, but, after all, life has been and is very rich. A sunbeam across the floor, a weed by the gate, the light in a child's dear eyes, a husband's love, a friend's handclasp and a sunset on each day bring you and me at last to the place to which we climb—the sunlit heights.

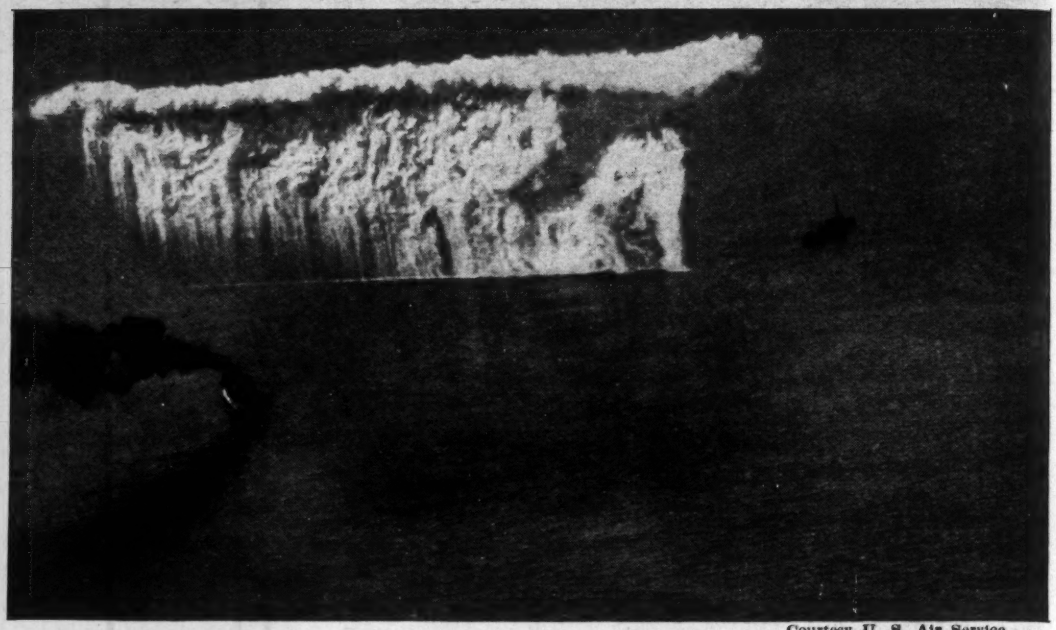
HOW OLD?

How old am I? This now you ask of me.
What answer shall I make, what wise words say,
That will the glory of the years convey
To youth? How say "The best is yet to be"
To those of you who stand with waiting feet
Where brook and rushing river soon must meet?

This then:
The coming years, like wise men from the east,
Bring gifts of fragrant frankincense and myrrh;
Or, like great universities, confer
Their rank of honor, sign of wisdom's feast:
Or, like the rainbow arch, hold true their glow
If short the distance, or if far you go.

Dear heart:
Of you one question now take I in fee:
The full blown rose, how old is it, tell me?
Or autumns sweet, white, frail anemone?
The yonder moon above the brimming sea,
The evening breeze stirring our linden tree,
How old are these? How old am I? Tell me, Tell me:

Ruth Fargo



Courtesy U. S. Air Service.

From the dropping of curtains of gas and smoke around battleships came the idea that airplanes might be used to drop poison dust on boll weevils.

THE USE OF AIRPLANES TO DESTROY THE BOLL WEEVIL

By CORLEY McDARMENT

THE late war had an effect like an opening ball or a "first night" on the airplane. So popular and useful did flying machines become after their first appearance in battle that all countries began making them by the thousands and when the cameras clicked on the last big trench drive in 1918 every nation found itself overstocked with airplanes, held either in reserve or under construction. The United States was caught bulging and overloaded with machines ready to send to the front, and a peace-time problem at once arose over the disposition of these surplus war planes.

An idea finally glimmered upon a few government officials in the United States that, as a last resort, the airplanes might be put to useful work, and this thought struck fertile ground in the minds of some of the younger members of the Department of Agriculture.

It was four years after the war, however, that the Department of Agriculture began an important series of experiments with the use of airplanes against boll weevils in the South, and in January, 1924, after two years of experimenting, a definite announcement was made that a tool with wings had been added to the cotton fields. The unprecedented success of the airplanes has caused at least three airplane factories to start designing and manufacturing models of a special agricultural airplane; for the military machines, after showing what could be done, were found unsuited for general practice and, also, the surplus war machines are now practically all used up. The approaching cotton season will usher in the special type of airplanes. Already builders are rushing their working models to completion in order to demonstrate them before the Department officials this summer and fall, during the boll weevil season.

The first contact between agriculture and aviation was interesting but tragic. Back in 1918 when much flying was be-

Courtesy U. S. Air Service.

(Above) A military airplane, used to destroy malaria-carrying mosquitos, spreading its load of poison dust over stagnant swampland. (Below) Dusting cotton at 100 miles an hour.

ing done at the aviation training fields, a member of the crop estimate division of the Department of Agriculture happened to be near a Texas flying field, trying to figure out the general condition of the cotton crops in that vicinity. One day an aviator took him up for a practice flight and from the airplane the agricultural observer could see acres and acres of growing cotton that would have required weeks to inspect on the ground. This set him thinking. The regular way of estimating cotton crops was slow and inaccurate. The observer was required to ride on horse or mule-back from farm to farm, and in order to get better views frequently stopped and climbed fences or saplings. But with an airplane the observer noted that a single crop estimator might be able to flit from field to field like a yellow-winged butterfly and estimate more acreage in one day than forty men could on mule-back or up a tree. He got in touch with the Department of Agriculture at Washington and an arrangement was made whereby the Army Air Service furnished a training place and pilot for this agricultural work. Things went along very successfully for a while and the observer was obtaining more data with greater accuracy than ever before. But one day something happened. The airplane was found demolished and the pilot and observer dead.

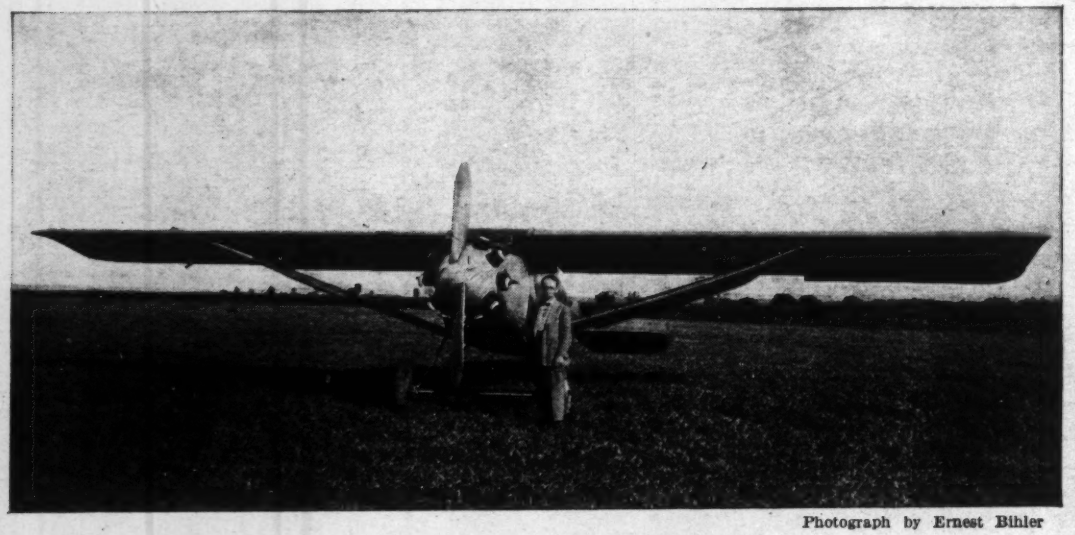
This gave a big setback to the use of airplanes in such work and it was not until August, 1921, that a former colonel in the U. S. Army, back on his old job with the Department of Agriculture, decided to try airplanes to sprinkle poison on the tops of Catalpa trees near Dayton, Ohio, and kill out caterpillars that were defoliating the groves. The ex-colonel knew that near the close of the

war preparations were being made to sprinkle poison gas and liquid fire by airplane on soldiers in the trenches and he thought something like this could probably be used against caterpillars. Arrangements were made for the loan of the Army airplanes at Dayton for an experiment. Instead of using poison gas or liquid fire, powdered lead arsenate, an approved insecticide, was sprinkled by crude hand method from the air upon the tree tops and the caterpillars immediately curled up and died.

The success of this caterpillar job suggested the use of airplanes in the more noble work of fighting big game like the cotton boll weevil. This was when the young men with the fertile brains began pestering the higher and more conservative officers in the department to let them conduct a regular airplane campaign against weevils. They received smiles and sometimes an honest "Ha, ha." But they were persistent and to end the matter once and for all it was decided to let a few of them go ahead with the dangerous airplane project and kill themselves, as a lesson to the rest. So plans were laid for the next open season, the summer of 1922, and arrangements were again made with the Army Air Service for the loan of airplanes, pilots and mechanics. Tallulah, Louisiana, the "hot bed of the boll weevil," was selected as the first point of attack. And like giving a man a big meal before execution, the Department of Agriculture furnished the self-condemned weevil fighters a full supply of poisoned dust, weather vanes, barometers, test tubes, microscopes, and first class transportation by rail to the field of action. Along with the "misguided youths" went a statistician, a photographer, a weather forecaster, an entomologist, and a lecturer, who were also to act as pall bearers. Local undertakers were to be used. The whole procession arrived at Tallulah. There they met a live and hopeful crew of aviators who flew all around the country each day without accident and funeral arrangements for the

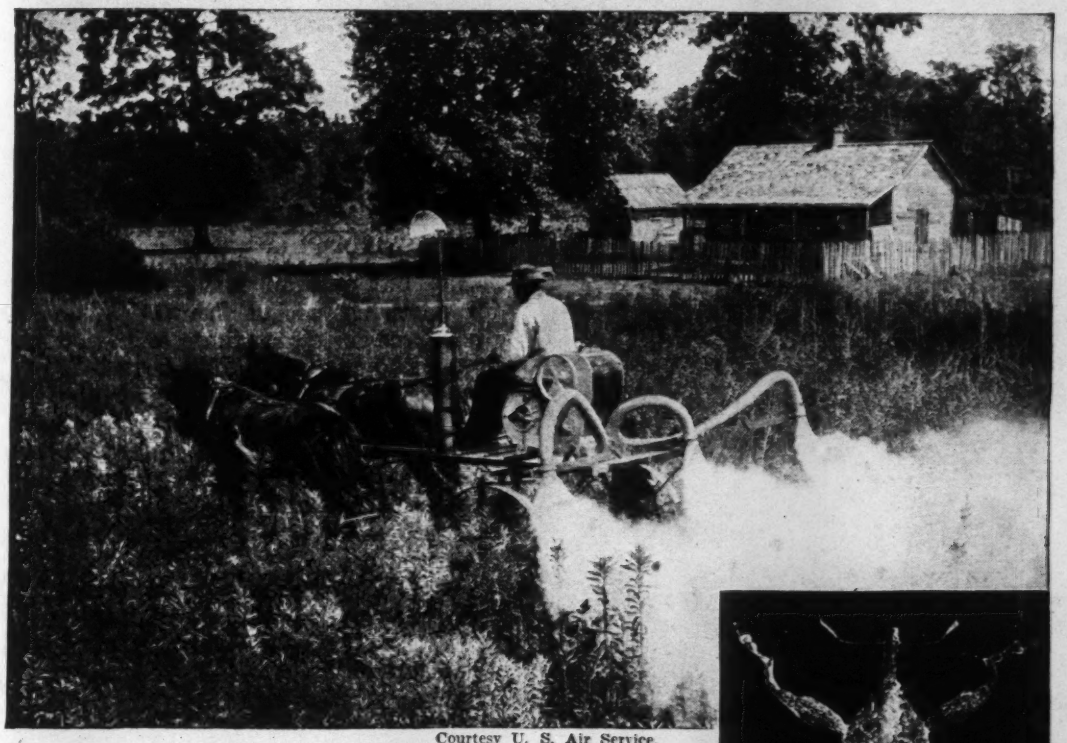
Courtesy U. S. Air Service.

Model of a cotton duster.



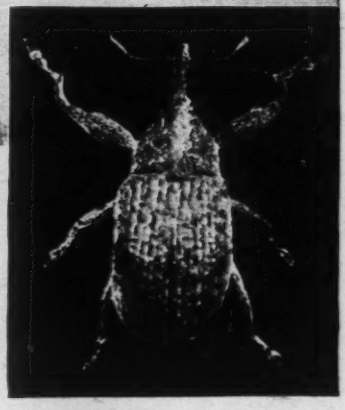
Photograph by Ernest Bihler

An airplane built solely for commercial use with a low landing speed.



Courtesy U. S. Air Service.

The old way — a ground-operated duster can cover only some 30 acres a night, while an airplane sprays about 1000 acres an hour.



The boll weevil himself.

agricultural experimenters were temporarily suspended and gradually forgotten, as the flying increased.

A sort of aero-chemical base was established at Tallulah and work began at once in great earnest. The aviators became as interested as the agriculturist and before long what was perhaps one of the greatest experiments ever conducted in the history of agriculture was under way. The season of 1922 passed with no accidents and the enthusiastic experimenters returned to Washington with a mass of first hand figures and data that could not be laughed away. Permission to continue the experiments during the summer and fall of 1923 came easily and it is upon the success of this season that the fame rests.

Three mighty questions which had to be satisfactorily answered confronted the agricultural workers before anything of value could be said to result from the airplane experiments. These were: Can the airplanes be flown up and down the cotton rows in such a way that the plants will be thoroughly sprayed with poison dust? How can the dust be forced down from the airplanes to the cotton plants and be made to stick in a quantity sufficient to kill the insects? What will the operation cost?

In about ten minutes the aviators demonstrated to the little band of agriculturists at Tallulah that airplanes could fly over a cotton field at almost any altitude from two feet to ten thousand and could swerve around dead trees, zoom over negro cabins or other obstacles, and hold a straight course up and down the cotton rows in open fields. Therefore a quick and easy answer came for the first question.

An affirmative answer to question number two, however, came neither soon nor easily and that which appeared simplest at the start caused the most trouble. The obstacles here were in making a suitable container, or "hopper," and in trying to fit the military airplanes to the agricultural work. The Army planes used at first were built primarily to

train cadets in the art of flying. They were made for an instructor and one middle-sized cadet with his pockets empty, so a box of poison was surplus both in weight and space. The 125 pound box of poison usually carried made the "Jennies," as these planes

The success of exterminating boll weevils by airplane is largely due to B. R. Coad.

were called, slow on taking the air and hence unsatisfactory.

Later the famous De Haviland planes were loaned by the Air Service and were considered quite an advance over the ones used earlier. But these planes, too, had their disadvantages. They were built strictly for military purposes with a speed of 90 to 120 miles an hour, which is much faster than boll weevils need to be sprayed. And they are notorious for big wrecks when they strike obstacles in landing. The Chief of Air Service stated in his annual report that some of these airplanes were becoming unsafe on account of their age, but the best ones available were loaned the Agricultural Department for spraying use and no accidents occurred during two years of flying.

The special airplanes that the Department of Agriculture expects to receive from the factories during the coming season will have landing speeds of about thirty miles an hour which should make them almost as safe as automobiles and they will have no gun swivels or bomb racks, but instead large compartments for carrying useful things. When the weevil season closes these airplanes may be used to carry produce, search for lost live stock, sow grass seed or for mapping and surveying. An apparatus for scattering grass seed over harrowed land and a hopper for spraying poison dust against boll weevils, leaf worms and caterpillars will be built into the body of the machine.

An absolutely satisfactory apparatus for spraying dust from airplanes has been very hard to obtain, but the construction and operation of such an appliance is one that offers no great engineering difficulty. Experience will eventually produce a perfect spraying apparatus.

All kinds of home-made hoppers were fixed up at first in the cockpits of the airplanes at Tallulah to carry and spray the poison upon the cotton, but most of them had peculiar habits. Fair success was attained although some dropped nearly all the poison at once when the crank was turned. Life for boll weevils was miserable within a radius of fifty miles, especially for those that received a whole hopper load of poison at once.

Powdered calcium arsenate was the chief poison used in these experiments. A way was found by using the blast from the airplane propeller and blowing the powder into smaller particles to scatter about two pounds per acre with just as good effect as the ordinary ground machines got with six pounds per acre.

A way to make the poison dust stick to the cotton was discovered by accident, and a remarkable scientific principle that had not been suspected before was revealed.

It was the practice with the mule or hand-drawn machines to spray the cotton only at night or early morning, while the cotton plants were moist with dew so the dust would stick, and it was

thought that the airplanes would also be compelled to fly and spray at night. The wind during the daytime was also believed to be a prohibiting factor against day spraying, as the dust would all be blown away, especially if delivered from a fast airplane.

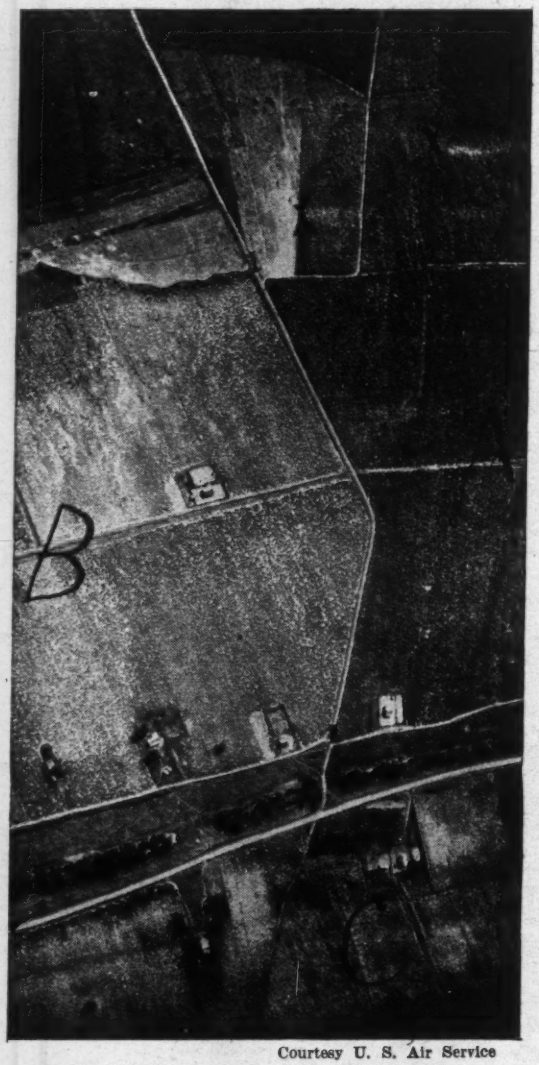
Attempts to sprinkle liquid poisons on dry cotton had proved too costly as well as ineffective, and liquid was also difficult to carry. In the light of past experience it was apparent that day work with airplanes would be useless. But while the landing lights and other paraphernalia were being prepared for the night flying, an impatient aviator wanted to try out the thing a time or two during the day just to see how it looked. Taking the air with a full container of dust and a member of the department at the crank, the airplane flew to the far end of the cotton patch, circled and started back across it lengthwise, in full view of the observers who were regarding the oncoming plane with idle curiosity. A wind of twenty miles an hour was blowing so that any attempt at dusting dry cotton in such a wind was considered folly. But as the plane swooped over, a curious thing occurred which caused chemists, entomologists, meteorologists and others versed in science to stand up and strain their eyes in wonder. Instead of the dust blowing away through the air as it was supposed to do, it descended on the left hand side of the airplane in a long wide funnel-shaped spiral to the ground and settled upon the cotton. The container was soon emptied and the plane landed. The investigators, unable to believe what they saw, sent the plane up again, this time to fly cross wind. The dust came down as before and instead of blowing away in the wind made an even swath of powdered cotton that reached all the way across the field.

The scientists called it a day and went into conference to figure out why the dust did not blow away in the wind. The anemometer was carefully checked and the wind found to be about twenty miles an hour. Discussions ensued and many probable causes of the strange behavior of the dust were put forward. Talk naturally drifted to molecules, atoms, ions and the like, and at last some one offered the following explanation: The dust particles discharged from the airplane at high speed are charged with positive electricity, while the cotton plants, having one end buried in the ground similar to lightning rods, are charged with negative electricity. As everybody knows, things oppositely charged attract each other, and in this way the queer affinity of the dust for the cotton was apparently explained. About that time one of the aviators who had studied aerodynamics at Cornell in 1917 overheard the conference and threw in a "slipstream" theory. He explained that the airplane propeller turning over at 1450 revolutions per minute opens a hole in the air in front of the airplane and crowds the air from this hole backward in a mighty swirl which extends a mile or more behind an airplane. This is called the slipstream or propeller "wash" and is like the wake of a boat in the water. As most airplane propellers turn to the left, the wash has a downward left-hand tendency, and the

Lieut. Russell C. McDonald, in charge of experiments against the boll weevil.

airplane has a left-hand pull, known among flyers as the propeller "torque." By combining the aviator's explanation with that of the molecule men, two very good and plausible reasons really existed for every phase of the phenomena.

The day of this experiment was an important one for the agricultural experts as well as the aviators. The lanterns that had been collected for night flying were put away and day spraying taken up immediately. Later it was found that the highest winds of the season did not materially affect the dust spraying and the swirling motion given the dust in the slipstream was the best possible method of disseminating the poison. Thus was answered the Agricultural Department's second question in a startling and unsuspected way.



Courtesy U. S. Air Service

Field A sprayed by airplanes, Field B not treated at all, Field C sprayed by ground machines. Darker areas are healthy.

But just before the airplanes started spraying in earnest, a big commotion arose among the Louisiana negroes over a fear that the poison dust would blow over the cabins and kill them all, along with the weevils. This idea was dispelled by recalling that for several years people had been using this same dust in ground sprayers and nobody had ever been injured. It was explained that the higher animals get such a small amount of the poison by inhalation that they are not affected.

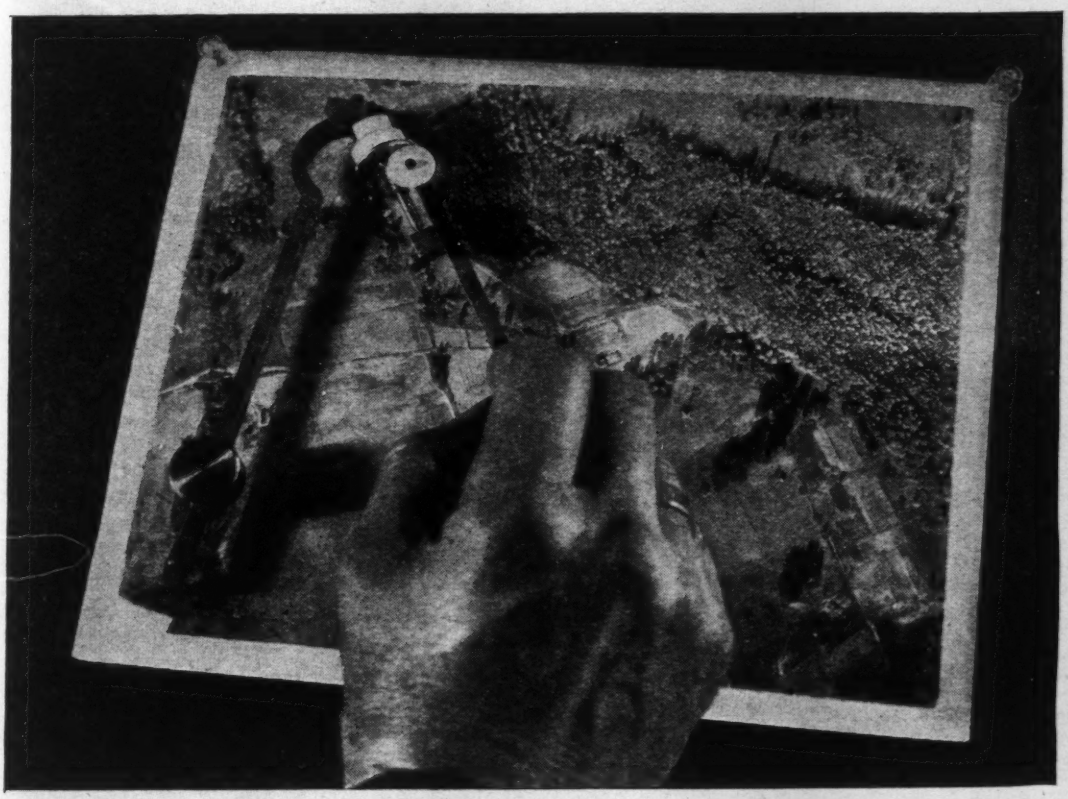
The agricultural workers at Tallulah soon demonstrated to the world that poison dust could be sprinkled on cotton from airplanes, it could be made to stick to the cotton plants, the operation could be carried on at a miraculous speed, and boll weevils could thus be murdered by the millions. But the question of cost, old question number three, loomed up. The workers at first paid little attention to this matter, as the government furnished all the flying equipment, but as soon as they learned the spraying trick could actually be done, a detailed study of the cost began. The report on this, issued a few months ago, is startling. It is what sent airplane manufacturers scurrying back into their empty shops to start designs on a new type of airplane. It has set speculators wondering and has led to more or less exciting predictions on future combats with all insects. The cotton crop of last year serves as a concrete example. It is estimated that the boll weevil last year destroyed 2,000,000 bales of cotton or took at least $200,000,000 from the pockets of southern farmers. Of course when a smaller crop is raised a higher price is obtained for the cotton and the farmers are compensated in a way, but a despairing planter, seeing his crop being eaten up by the pernicious insects, does not accept this as a balm. Another angle to this economic situation arises in the fact that the higher the price paid for cotton, the higher the cost of clothing soars. So the modest clothes-consumers of the North, East and West as well as

the South really pay for the expensive annual banquet of the boll weevils.

The Department of Agriculture has been working for many years on the weevil pest. Limited success in dust spraying by hand-sprays and horse-drawn machines was attained several years ago and the Department has been trying to educate all the farmers to the value of these spraying methods, but the area to be covered is so large and the process of poisoning so slow that no great progress has been possible.

One very worthy thing has been the distribution by the Department of Agriculture of warning literature among the poorer and less educated farmers who have been widely exploited by peddlers who sell worthless insect traps and patent medicines to keep the weevils down. Each year many negroes buy bonfires from traveling strangers. These venders direct the preparations for the fire, they touch the burning match to the debris and after the flame is going well pour in a bottle of a "secret" liquid. The theory here is that the weevils, smelling the burnt liquid, will look out of the cotton bolls to see what is happening and they will behold the bonfire; this arouses their curiosity and they will fly over to inspect it; then, not having sense enough to keep themselves out of the fire, they will fly in and be consumed. But under the department's educational program all this kind of business will gradually disappear.

With proper aerial equipment officials of the department have estimated that 1000 acres of cotton can be sprayed in an hour. This is a particular advantage, as it enables spraying over large areas immediately after a rain, which is the time the weevils and leaf worms are most active. Ground machines cannot operate in muddy fields, but this does not hinder airplanes. Getting poison applied a few hours after a rain will often result in saving a cotton crop, for weevils and worms have been known to defoliate a cotton field in eight hours after a rain. With the best ground machines at present constructed only twenty-five or thirty acres of cotton can be dusted in one night and one of these machines cannot care for more than 100



Courtesy U. S. Air Service.

The "planimeter" estimates crop acreage from airplane photographs in a new way.

Courtesy U. S. Air Service.

Army plane flying over Central America, where the boll weevil originated.

acres in a season. The price of these machines is around $350 and two mules and one man are required to operate it.

The future costs of airplane-spraying will not be greater than the figures shown last season and, in a short time, even these will be greatly reduced.

The initial cost of a "Jenny" airplane at the present market price is around $3600. The regular motor of this machine has a life of about 500 flying hours and the airplane itself lasts 1000 hours. By dusting 1000 acres of cotton an hour, 500,000 acres of land can be treated by a single plane before its motor needs a complete overhauling. According to the experiments one airplane can save $85,000 worth of cotton in a season. There are only 396,800,000 acres of weevil-infested cotton land in the United States and according to strict figures 794 airplanes could cover all the cotton section for at least one spraying. It is safe to say that about 2000 airplanes could control the boll weevil in one season or at least render its ravages negligible. And once under control, the weevils can be annihilated, for sporadic outbreaks could be quickly checked.

The government estimates that 75,000 pounds of calcium arsenate will be used this summer and fall against the boll weevils, as against 31,000 pounds last year. This includes all methods of spraying.

An airplane can do as much dusting as forty ground machines and the average nightly cost of operating forty of these machines is $236. A military airplane costs a good deal to run, but on a commercial basis with such machines the operation would cost about as follows: Pilot's salary, $50.00 a day; mechanic, $15.00; fuel, $15.00; and $60.00 for depreciation on airplane and motor, making a total of $140.00 a day. With all other incidentals, including cost of the dust, a distinct financial advantage rests with the airplane, in addition to the speed of operation. During an eight hour day forty ground machines could dust 1200 acres if everything went right. In a four hour day with an airplane dusting only 700 acres an hour, 2800 acres could be covered, but at least an hour and a half would be taken out for refilling the present type of planes, so the acreage would be cut to about 1750 acres. The new agricultural machines now coming on the market have a much higher efficiency.

The diligent laboratory and field research which the Department of Agriculture has long been conducting with the boll weevil, as well as the intimate knowledge gained of this insect, is a contributing cause of the airplane suc-

cess in the dusting experiments. In fact the research accomplishments of the Department as a whole is one of the marvels of America.

The minutest information on many subjects can be obtained from the Department Headquarters at Washington, D. C. Take the boll weevil. The boll weevil alone does not mean anything. It is only in the insect's relation to cotton that it is thought of and the two subjects are always associated just like automobiles and blow outs. Obviously if a person, an expert agricultural writer, for example, should want information on the weevil he would first start at the cotton end of the Agricultural Department. A well-informed clerk will tell him, without hesitation, the number of bales of cotton raised during the past year, or how much can be raised during the next year, provided everything goes as it has in the past.

In another office information will be obtained on crop averages and prices. The visitor wanders back deeper into the building and when the subject of boll weevil comes up he is near the rear entrance. An attendant will then point to a building across the street where the bugs are housed. This entire building is devoted to entomology. Upon entering the building and making inquiry the wanderer is ushered to the boll weevil office. A doctor, as would be expected, reigns here, surrounded with books and pamphlets, nearly all having some bearing upon insects. When told that knowledge is sought upon the boll weevil, the doctor's face lights up and he begins to talk like a brother. When asked if there are any weevils around he will open a handy drawer and produce a black covered box, about the size of a meat platter. This box is carefully placed before the customer, the lid removed, and lo, there is the choicest array of bugs any heart could desire. They are all stuck up on little pins just as natural as life. "Which is the boll weevil?" the visitor will probably ask.

Deftly the old gentleman picks a bug from the northeast corner and holds it a few inches from the questioner's eyes, turning it around on the pin so that a front and side view can be obtained. If sufficient enthusiasm is shown, the doctor will let the visitor hold the pin and turn it for himself. Attention will then be drawn to the other bugs in the box, and with thorough knowledge the

Courtesy of U. S. Air Service

On fields of any shape the amount of cotton is easily estimated by the new device.

doctor explains that these are related species of the weevil. They are the uncles, aunts and so on back to fourth cousins on the mother's side twice removed, and it becomes apparent that the boll weevil has a pedigree equal to that of My Own or Zev.

The tape measure has been applied to the weevils and it has been found that the average weevil is one quarter of an inch long and its breadth, or bust measurement, is one-third its length. The color is grey or brown. Nobody but an entomologist can tell a boll weevil from the large number of other species of beetles. Of course a farmer finding a weevil imbedded in a cotton boll is pretty safe in guessing it is a boll weevil without a college degree in entomology, but in just meeting one among several others on the street it is hard to recognize.

The weevil passes the winter as an adult, or beetle. In the spring the females that have survived the winter get busy laying eggs. These females have a curious temperament. No two females will lay their eggs in the same square if they can help it, and the big spring rustle to get exclusive squares results in far more injury to the cotton plant than if these females would be more congenial and lay together in parties once in a while. Along late in the season, when laying ground becomes scarce, two or more females may condescend to deposit their eggs on the same square, but even then they try to get on opposite sides. The eggs hatch out in about three days and the little grub begins to eat. It eats for about ten days, then passes into a pupa stage. After about four days of pupa business the insect emerges and starts producing another generation. It is only during the adult stage that poison dust is effective against the weevils, as it is then they feed upon the outside foliage and eat the poison dust.

By careful spying it was discovered that the chief activity of the boll weevil is between 9:00 a. m. and 5:00 p. m. with no time off at noon. The discovery of this period of greatest activity has been highly important, for during these hours airplanes fly and spray best.

Such profound knowledge of the weevil as shown by the doctor could not have been merely picked up, but was clearly gained by getting right down among the boll weevils and living, eating and sleeping with them. He even speaks their language. The doctor also knows all about the first weevils that migrated to the United States. It was back in 1892 that the strange little bugs crossed the Rio Grande near Brownsville, Texas, and set up operations in the nearby cotton fields. The cotton plants which normally shed about half their squares began to shed practically all, and upon examination, farmers found the little larva in the undeveloped bolls. Only a small portion of the cotton raisers, however, went broke that year and the country at large gave but slight attention to the matter. But as each succeeding year saw a rapid spread of the pest, a general alarm was sounded, and now all the cotton belt is infested except a part of Western Texas and Oklahoma, two counties in New Mexico, and a small section around Norfolk, Virginia. North Carolina and South Carolina were free from the weevil until 1918, then, probably taking advantage of the Great War, the weevils started here, and by the end of 1922 they had swept these two states like secession in '60.

So important has the weevil become in the economic life of the world that no pains or expense has been spared to learn all there is to be known about its habits. It has been easy to get Congressional appropriations to fight the pest. No Southern Congressman could possibly turn down a heavily infested constituency, and the Northern "Guardians of the People's Rights" have not dared curtail the raw cotton supply and thus raise the price of cotton at the mills. It is often said that the boll weevil has drawn more Congressmen together than anything since the spirit of '76 in the Continental Congress. Some people declare that the weevil should not be wholly exterminated on account of this unparalleled modern achievement.

The money that the Department of Agriculture gets from Congress goes for things that benefit mankind in general and whenever a new method is developed that shows a better way of doing things, it is used to the fullest extent. The use of the airplane, therefore, has not been

restricted solely to the boll weevil activity; but the department is finding many other ways to use them. Crop estimating by air has again been resumed and conclusive experiments in Mississippi and Louisiana have been conducted, showing that crops can be estimated from airplanes with far more accuracy and speed than ever before. By airplane the expert estimators can cover several counties in a day and gather the correct data on the amount of corn, cotton, hay and so forth under cultivation and the general crop conditions. With practice the human eye is able to distinguish the different growing crops from altitudes as high as 2500 feet. In all probability this airplane method of surveying cotton, corn and wheat crops will have a great effect upon the markets. Big brokers who want to know crop conditions for their own purposes can have an aerial survey made within a very short time.

Aerial photography is being used to supplement and check observed crop conditions and an interesting method of measuring the photographs of irregularly shaped fields has been devised. This method is carried out by an instrument called a "planimeter" which has a slide rule attachment. Aerial pictures showing the different kinds of crops can also be easily interpreted with practice, although the pictures may be taken at high altitudes.

Locating wheat rust spores in the air has also been carried on by the department in conjunction with the Air Service, for the past two years. By taking slides or spore "traps" up to different altitudes and exposing them, it has been found that many fungus spores exist as high as 11,000 feet. During an experiment between Waco and San Antonio, Texas, 400 spores were captured in thirty minutes at 1500 feet, and of these, 353 were leaf rust spores. At 10,000 feet only one spore was caught, but it was a Puccinia Triticina. At 12,000 feet, another one, classed as miscellaneous, was hauled in. At 14,000 feet nothing was caught but at 15,000 feet two loose leaf rust spores were bagged. After a rain the upper air is usually quite free from spores for the drops of water attract them and bring them to earth. In this manner some of the miraculous epidemics of rust can be explained, for if a rain should start while large numbers of spores were passing over, the drops of water would bring them down and it would literally be a rain of spores.

The Department of Agriculture also has charge of mosquitoes and malaria. Or rather the Treasury Department runs the malaria through its public Health Service and the Agricultural Department has the mosquitoes under its Entomological Bureau. It takes both, however, to produce the common ague which is likewise a southern malady.

The Department of Agriculture decided upon combatting the mosquitoes of the Louisiana swamps as a self-defense measure, while the airplane weevil-dusting was being conducted. Cans of oil were poured into all accessible water holes to keep down mosquitoes, but the mosquitoes swarmed in from the big swamps that could not be oiled. Finally somebody suggested letting the airplanes spray the swamps. It sounded plausible in view of the success of the weevil experiment, so large quantities of mosquito powder, or a special poison dust, was mixed up and sprayed by the airplane just above the tree tops in the swamp areas. To the joy of every one concerned, mosquitoes were controlled. If later and more exhaustive tests against this pest prove as successful as these first ones, the importance of such work cannot be overestimated. The poison scattered from airplanes for mosquitoes filtered through the branches of the trees and the shrubs, killing all the mosquitoes along the way and then settled upon the water and killed the wiggletails as they came up for air, thus preventing their development into mosquitoes.

In this remarkable experiment, aviators and agricultural experts see a means at hand to exterminate or at least control the mosquito pest. The large flat mosquito-laden swamps of New Jersey, for example, are well situated for airplane flights from Mitchell Field, Long Island, and the air station at Aberdeen, Maryland. In these swamps great quantities of mosquito poison can be sprinkled at the rate of 100 miles an hour. New Jersey has an area of 8224 square miles of which only about one tenth is "under mosquitoes" during a part of the year. A squadron of twenty

airplanes could sprinkle this mosquito area in two days, or ten machines could do it in about four days, and this is much faster than the mosquitoes can hatch.

In addition to the airplane work of the Department of Agriculture, the Army Air Service has been engaged lately in killing out grasshoppers in the Philippine Islands, and such was the success attained in this that plans are being laid to exterminate locusts entirely from the islands. The ravages of those insects on the sugar plantations has been causing heavy losses to the planters each year. The Air Service has also sowed a quantity of grass seed upon some of the barren mountains of the Hawaiian Islands for the benefit of stock grazing. In March of this year airplanes dropped bombs upon the ice jams of the Platte River in Nebraska, started the flow of water, saved the country from inundation and prevented the loss of a railroad bridge across the river. The flight of American aviators through Central America has suggested the use of airplanes to combat the huge vampire bats that swarm over the herds of animals in certain portions of the country and bleed them to death. These blood-sucking vampires can no doubt be easily killed by poison gas. The breeding places of the bats are in the impassable jungles, but airplanes could fly over these and release the poison.

The Chief of the Chemical Warfare Service has stated that he can make poison gases that can be used in the United States during peace for such purposes as killing insects. A great peace-time activity would result if the Army Air Service and the Chemical Warfare Service could combine on a big wholesale sprinkling campaign aganst boll weevils, mosquitoes, flies and grasshoppers. But if the gases used should be of the reputed superdeadly post-war developments — the kind that are guaranteed to end wars in one week — care would be necessary, otherwise the whole country might need to be thrown open for settlement again, as it was soon after the year 1492 when Columbus first discovered it.

THE WOLVES

By MALCOLM WHEELER-NICHOLSON

IN gold and green and crimson and with the glint of jeweled decorations, the Russian officers in Vladivostok kept up their former state and customs. The loud hum of their voices arose above the throb of violins and the clatter of dishes at tea hour in the Zoladar Rog, the foremost cafe in the Siberian city, and probably the most famous in Asia itself — easily the most colorful.

But the clatter and talk was suddenly stilled and a hush filled the great high-ceilinged room. Some man had commenced a song.

It was a melodious song, a half barbaric thing, a burst of music that might be chanted by gray battalions of Russian infantry on the march. It rose, stronger and more powerful, in a man's rich baritone. It grew in volume until it seemed to dominate the room.

Then suddenly a roar of sound burst forth as the entire cafe crashed into the chorus, as only Russians can crash into a chorus, a musical shouting thunder of voices accompanied by the rattle of glasses and the stamp of feet. The song ended as abruptly as it had begun. There were a few wild cheers and men settled back again to serious talk.

Jimmy's interest was aroused. The stirring melody, with its undercurrent of haunting tragedy, brought back clearly the picture of the Russian infantry, compact, slow and solemn, marching in the parade that morning.

"What is the name of that wild song?" he asked.

"That," she replied, her voice vibrant with enthusiasm, "is the song of a great Russian hero, Semyon, who lived in the old days." And her eyes glowed under the long straight eyebrows, as she dreamily gave play to the emotions aroused by the music.

"What did he do?" Jimmy continued with his questions.

"Oh, Semyon was sent to get help for his comrades who were attacked by the mad King Charles of Sweden. He took his sweetheart with him in the sleigh. The road led them into a dark forest." Sonia paused, leaning forward dramatically. "The wolves suddenly appeared! They were very hungry wolves and they tried to pull down the horses. So he very sadly kissed his sweetheart good-bye and threw her into the snow to the wolves. So the wolves no longer followed and he was able to bring aid to his comrades. Was not that brave of him?" She finished this naive recital in her clear careful English and then looked up for Jimmy's approbation.

Her brow wrinkled in puzzlement when she found him listening with ill-concealed amazement. "You mean he actually chucked his girl to the wolves to save his own skin?" he demanded.

"No, no!" she corrected impatiently, "you do not understand. He sacrificed his sweetheart to save his comrades. He had first to think of his duty to his comrades and his army," she explained as one would to a child.

"Looks a little odd to my simple soul," he commented dryly, "I don't think Russian ideas of heroism would go well with Americans."

Her delicate features flushed ever so slightly, she gazed at him in growing puzzlement.

"Just suppose that you were the girl in the case," he persisted. "How would you feel about such a lover?"

Quick as lightning was her response. "I have never loved, but did I love I would meet my death with joy if thereby I could help my lover to do his duty," she answered, her eyes flashing.

Gazing at her proudly poised head with grudging admiration, "You probably would at that," Jimmy remarked half to himself; then shaking his head, "Good story book stuff, but things like that don't happen in real life."

"But this *did* happen and things like that happen every day in real life," she countered quietly, gazing out over the crowded cafe with unseeing eyes.

With the exception of a few scattered allied representatives the place was filled for the greater part with Russian offi-

cers. In spite of their preponderance of numbers in Vladivostok there was not a single Japanese officer in the place. None ever appeared in this cafe, for very good reasons.

Another sudden hush in the place prevented Jimmy from continuing the discussion with his beautiful companion. Turning to discover the reason, he found to his surprise that every Russian in the place was on his feet, silently at attention, with every eye fixed on the big folding doors of the cafe entrance. Within this doorway stood a brilliantly uniformed officer, in Hussar costume, blue dolman and heavy gold aigulettes. His was a slightly built, spare, trim figure; one hand was on the gorgeously jeweled hilt of a curving saber, the other nervously covered a patch over his left eye. From his quietly commanding air and the richness of his uniform, Jimmy judged that the stranger must be a person of some importance.

Succeeding events confirmed this, for an awed whisper, "Ataman! Ataman!" ran round the room as the newcomer strode briskly to a table, followed at a respectful distance by two huge Cossack soldiers, a bodyguard armed with rifle, saber and dagger. After the personage was seated each and every Russian officer made his way humbly to the table where a question was asked with bent head. Upon receipt of their answers the greater part returned quietly to their own tables. To one or two luckless ones he shook his head coldly, and these departed, immediately and hurriedly leaving the cafe. He must indeed be of high rank, thought Jimmy, to make it obligatory upon all Russian officers to beg permission to remain in the same cafe with him.

Jimmy turned, but the half-formed question on his lips remained unasked, for Sonia was ashy pale, her eyes full of a strange dread. "It is the Ataman of the Ussuriki!" she whispered, "Come, I feel faint, we must leave." And she rose quickly, head bent low and made her way to the swinging doors of the kitchen. Jimmy, puzzled and anxious, followed her through the clatter of pots and pans and the steam from the stoves. They paused not until they had reached a dark alleyway in the rear of the building. Here she drew breath and laughed a little unsteadily.

"What is the trouble?" asked Jimmy, a worried frown on his face.

Avoiding his gaze her kindly eyes clouded with some vague trouble. "It is nothing," she answered with an assumption of lightness. Before he could demand again, she had bade him adieu, nervously and absently, and was gone, leaving him perplexed and thoughtful. What was the matter with her anyway? The personage was evidently Kalminoff, the famous one-eyed Ataman of the Ussuriki Cossacki, the comparatively youthful leader who headed all the Russians in Siberia, loyal to the old regime and a forerunner of Deniken and Wrangel in his efforts against the Bolsheviki. The story was current that he had lost his eye in a single-handed dash against an entire battalion of Letts, far in advance of his galloping squadrons. But what had he to do with Sonia? She had most certainly been unusually upset on viewing this redoubtable warrior.

A good deal of a mystery, Sonia, with her brooding eyes and strange silences, for all her frank comradely friendship. The first time that he had seen her he had been strangely drawn to her. He had rescued her, a frightened young girl, in dark furs and with dark hair low lying on her forehead. Her beautifully chiselled features were perturbed and anxious at the importunities of a sullen crowd of Japanese soldiers surrounding her *drosky,* while her bewildered *ishvostchek* helplessly twirled his whip above the backs of the stamping horses.

Shyly and rather diffidently, she had accepted his proffers of friendship. They had met daily in this colorful cafe and chatted happily, listening to the wild music of the Gypsy orchestra, sipping tea and nibbling at the vari-colored little Russian cakes, the famous "*perushnia,*" while their friendship deepened.

Overcome a little one night by the glory of the Asiatic moon and the nearness of her clear profile and the tempting beauty of her lips, he had swiftly leaned down and kissed her as they said good night near the door of her little hotel. She had suffered the touch of his lips in that cold and passively weary manner that is far and away the most potent disarmer of passion, did a woman but know it. She had not been angry, only a little sad and a little pathetic as

she leaned against the door, staring at him gravely troubled.

"Your American girls, I do not know them, but they may be able to kiss lightly and forget. It is not like that with a Russian girl." She shook her head slowly. "When we surrender our lips we surrender all." And Jimmy departed homeward mentally kicking himself for his break, only to find that the next day she was as serene and kind as ever, and as pleasant as though nothing had come between them.

He had learned little about her. She adroitly changed the subject when he approached too close to her history, but she had informed him that she was a singer and was studying and working hard to perfect her voice. It was a beautiful enough voice, in all truth, with a rich and golden throb. But everything was so topsy-turvy in this strange land, the unexpected so continually lurked just around the corner, that he did not bother his head about the mystery of her. Sufficient for him was the fact that Sonia was a delightful person to be with, a high-spirited young thing, superbly proud and with flaming courage, yet possessing untouched wells of tenderness and sweet solicitude and great kind eyes in which a man could find peace and a haven against the turmoil of the world. And a man had need of peace and a haven these days.

For like most of the American officers, Jimmy's waking hours were full of worry and his sleeping hours disturbed by dreams of his soldiers encompassed about and sinking under the attacks of alien enemies.

The way was not easy for this little forgotten handful of Americans in far off Siberia. Their foothold in that distant land was insecure and precarious. A sullen menace was in the air. Fear was in the hearts of men. The great German offensive was getting slowly under way on the Western Front. New and powerful forces in the Orient, watching keenly, and hoping to profit by the dissensions among those of the white race, stood ready to combine with the winners. White men who knew waited, haggard and worried, for news from France. A great reverse there for the Allies meant inevitably a shake-up in the Orient, a new alignment of forces in Siberia, perhaps the driving of the white man from Asia. Outnumbered ten to one in Siberia by the military forces of an alien and inscrutable race, the small Allied forces in Vladivostok waited tense and breathless for news from the muddy trenches of the Western Front.

Jimmy's battalion had paraded that morning. Riding at their head, he had been momentarily forgetful of his worries in the face of their trim completeness as they swung along in olive drab and bronze. It was there at the parade that he had first heard that haunting Song of Semyon, the same that had crashed forth so spontaneously in the cafe of the Zoladar Rog. It had been chanted by a marching battalion of Russians, chanted with a peculiarly sustained rhythmic drone, its steady beat relieved ever and anon by a wildly exultant note, mounting swiftly delirious and again sinking to be merged in a deeper tone, as the wind rises screaming above the steady roar of the midnight storm and then lulls again into moaning acquiescence.

This battalion of Russians was one of the few left of that former immense army now wrecked in the red blaze of the Bolshevik *debacle* on the far side of Lake Baikal and the Urals. Gray compact masses of powerful, slow, marching men, they moved stolidly, with a steady rise and fall of their rude boots on the cobbled streets, to the wailing notes of this half barbaric melody which might easily have been sung by ancient savage warriors on the edges of the Oxus and the Indus. They passed, only to have the staccato rattle of hoofs herald the approach of the Cossacks, several *sotnias* of them, trotting swiftly out of a side street. Their steel-tipped lances flaunted gay pennons of black and red. Each clump of lances was led by picturesque officers, great fellows colorful in blue and gold, beautifully booted and spurred, with curving jewelled-handled sabers and daggers clinking musically with silver chains.

Followed the other Allies, little handfuls of men, Czecho-Slovaks in dark blue; khaki-clad British soldiers and a few sailors from their cruiser in the harbor; brisk little French Annamites, with careless Tam O'Shanter caps; Italians, their officers statuesque in toga-like capes and helmet-like caps; the Chinese, stoi-

cal and phlegmatic, each man carrying a fan and using it when the spirit moved him.

And then the Japanese, regiment after regiment, battalion after battalion of infantry, squadron after squadron of cavalry, battery after battery of field guns, until it seemed that the procession of drab uniformed stocky figures would never end. Agreeing to limit themselves to seven thousand men in Siberia, the latest reports gave them a strength of seventy thousand with more arriving by every ship.

And Kalminoff, the one-eyed Ataman of the Ussuriki, returned to his headquarters on the Amur.

Three days later found Jimmy speeding madly after him, a worried and preoccupied Jimmy, seated in a compartment of the Trans-Siberian train. Facing him was Sonia, a slim somber-eyed Sonia, her lithesome figure stretched out languorously on the seat. Jimmy was silent, frowning at his thoughts. If only Winfield had not been so serious that morning at American headquarters on Svetlanskaya.

"I don't see," Jimmy had expostulated, pacing heatedly up and down the long room, "how my going to Khabarovsk to see Kalminoff will keep us from being run into the sea if any one wants to do it. Heaven knows the War Department sent us over here like lambs to the slaughter; no men, no horses, no guns, no anything," he concluded bitterly.

"It's our only chance," repeated Winfield, a worried frown on his face. "If our noble but somewhat untrustworthy friends decide that the Allied goose is cooked in France, we are due for a lot of unpleasantness. If we can get the Russians lined up with us, it will save the day, for the Russians are pretty strong."

"Where do you get all this dope?" inquired Jimmy curiously, coming to a sudden halt.

Winfield shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I'm popularly supposed to be the Intelligence Officer for the American Forces in Siberia, with all the gum shoe work that implies. I know whereof I speak, all right. Don't worry about that. And believe me, old timer, if you don't come clean on this job there's liable to be a row here that will make Custer's last fight look like a game of tiddledywinks in comparison." And Winfield, the ordinarily gay and happy Winfield, sat back, somberly dejected, his hands in his pockets.

Jimmy gazed at him, impressed, and whistling softly in amaze. "Is it as bad as all that?" he inquired gravely, at last.

"Worse!" grunted Winfield, not looking at him.

Turning from the window, through which he had been gazing speculatively across the way to where a blood red banner dominated Svetlanskaya, a banner that rippled sinuously in the breeze, curving and flowing, as a cobra might weave and twist its shiny coils preparatory to striking, Jimmy nodded briefly. "All right, Win," he said soberly, "I'm on, I'll do my best."

There was one thing he must do first—say good-bye to Sonia. To his astonishment he found her in the lobby of her hotel, packed and ready to travel.

"Where in the dickens are you going?" he burst out.

"I leave for Khabarovsk," she replied simply. "I go to fill a singing engagement at the theater; I leave today."

"But I am leaving for Khabarovsk today also!" he had announced, amazement in his voice.

She recoiled swiftly, her face pale, her eyes large and round with sudden dismay. "You—to Khabarovsk—I do not understand!"

"Yes." He gazed at her, faintly piqued at her obvious displeasure. "You don't seem tickled to death at the prospect." He tried to keep the hurt out of his voice.

She reassured him breathlessly. "Indeed, yes, indeed, Jimmee, I am glad, only—it was so sudden and so surprising—and—is it not a little dangerous?"

"Dangerous?" he laughed shortly. "I don't think so. I am going up on some official business."

"Yes," she answered absently, "to see Kalminoff for the Americans, I suppose."

He turned a shocked and incredulous face towards her. "How did you know that?" he asked and his voice was filled with amazement and panic. "Don't for Heaven's sake say anything about it. How did you know?"

Turning away, she answered without

looking at him, her voice low and clear. "There are many things I know, Jimmee. Do not ask me." When next he saw her eyes he found them filled with tears.

But there was little time to puzzle over this in the rush of departure. There were many things to be done at the last moment, before they could settle into their roomy compartment.

The train had gathered speed, the telegraph poles were whipping by, the rails clicked with a steady rapid note, the windows rattled. Sonia sat silent opposite him, smoking, her eyes half closed as she inhaled the fragrant tobacco. He sat, a frown of concentration on his brow, trying to figure out the mystery of her. It was too much for him. He knew that it was useless to ask her any questions, but she worried him vaguely. There was so much that was indecipherable about this mysterious and beautiful young creature—her well-modelled features, clear cut like a cameo, her proud shapely little head set on a neck graceful in its slim perfection, her eyes steadfast and honest, her voice that sounded like the music of many silver bells, so musical that it left an overtone ringing in the ears long after she had stopped speaking. He brought himself up sharply. He was too much interested in Sonia; his thoughts strayed back to her invariably. The task ahead of him demanded every bit of his brains and energy. There was too much at stake to think of personal matters.

He wished Winfield had not picked him for this job. His heart quailed within him at the thought of the duty he had undertaken so lightly. It was no easy thing to be responsible for the lives and safety of several thousand men. A failure on his part might even mean a long-drawn-out and bloody war if these arrogant warrior Orientals were not checked on their mad course. Pretty clever idea though, at that, to checkmate them by winning the Russian support. There were thousands of Russians in Siberia; not only the inhabitants, descendants of the exiled *intelligentsia* of the Czar's day, but floods of government officials, army and navy and court, aristocrats and middle class, all united in their hatred of the Bolsheviki and all capable of being united against external enemies equally formidable.

The preponderant military force in Siberia had worked on the principle of divide and rule. They had managed effectually to keep the Americans and Russians apart. It was now up to Jimmy to bring them together. And it must be accomplished quickly, for any day the dread news might come from France that would mean the rise in Siberia of an ambitious and powerful race, eager to drive the white men into the sea. The steady click of the rails hammered persistently — "Into the sea! into the sea!" they seemed to be repeating. Well, God willing, he would do his best to prevent such a catastrophe.

He swept his hand across his wearied brow and raised his head to find Sonia's gaze fixed on him, in her eyes such sweet concern that he was embarrassed a little by the glory of it.

"You look so distrait, Jimmee," she commiserated softly. "You must stop worrying. It is not good for the poor head to keep it so full of troubles. Come, I will sing for you and you shall forget." Reaching behind her she drew forth one of those silvery-toned Russian *balalaikas* and tried the strings with a questing chord or two. Then she struck some deeper notes with a fuller resonance as though she had found that for which she sought.

"This is a song of the Cossacks, a very old thing, the Song of the Thirsty Lances. It is about the Great Prince Mstislaff Romanoff of Kiev and how he was treacherously slain by the Voivode Ploskina."

And with that she lifted her voice, a voice that rang like temple bells in the summer evening, so rich and clear it was, and, with long pauses in which the *balalaika* carried on the refrain, she sang a song that seemed to lift Jimmy up and set him down in far off dim places, where he could feel the earth shaken to the thunderous tread of galloping squadrons, could see the steel tips of forests of lances stretching to the horizon's limit, could see the earth blackened by the passage of hordes of fighting men and the sun darkened with the flight of ravens.

The song ended. Both were silent in revery. He thought of the once mighty Russia now writhing in agony. He thought of himself, strangely set down on the Asiatic edge of this enormous

hinterland; of his soldiers, young Americans from Oregon and Washington and California, traveling adventurously across purple seas and past "fantastic evening isles" to this mysterious land where there was so much laughter in the sunlight and so much weeping in the shadows, to face none knew what sort of treachery and to meet none knew what sort of fate.

Sweeping the strings again Sonia sang a more familiar air, the air of the marching battalion and the officers in the cafe, the Song of Semyon, Semyon Zarubkin who sacrificed all for duty, who left the tender body of his love mangled on scarlet snows that he might succor his comrades. Jimmy did not like the idea of that song but the music was as stirring as a sudden trumpet call to battle, impelling one to leap riotously forth to the fray as though shod with flying sandals, sandals winged with crimson flame. There was something peculiarly haunting about that song, a thread of tragedy woven into its texture, an underlying sobbing note that seemed to be at the base of all things Russian.

Again Sonia sang, strumming this time with a more gentle touch. Clear and sweet as the tragic notes of a nightingale the song poured forth — such a song as might arise from an Eastern garden bathed with deep moonlight and the scent of roses, a swift rising flood of ecstacy, dropping suddenly into a lament, cheerless and drear and unhappy, an ineffable longing for a hopeless love, patient resignation under a burden of sorrow almost too great to bear. It sobbed out its grief until suddenly it ended on a single tragic chord that echoed and re-echoed in the brain, so unutterably forlorn it was.

There were tears in Sonia's eyes as she finished and was silent. Jimmy sat speechless for a time. Then, "You sang most divinely Sonia," he gravely assured her. "You could almost make me admire your Russian hero, the way you sing of him, but that last unhappy melody should be about the poor girl who was thrown to the wolves. It is sad enough."

She gazed at him, her eyes strangely troubled for a moment. Then with a slight shiver, "No — it cannot be very pleasant to be thrown to the wolves by one's lover!" she replied to him dully.

Khabarovsk, that old-time military headquarters for the Amur district, still retained its warlike air, for it was the center of the activities of the White Russian forces in Siberia. Its streets were filled with marching troops and crowds of soldiers and officers, many of whom were later to meet death in Deniken's and Wrangel's unsuccessful attempts to destroy the Bolshevik power. The Ussuiki Cossacki of Kalminoff's force filled the town with their blue and gold and the streets echoed to the hoofs of their horses. Many wild tales were current of their ruthlessness in running down and destroying Bolshevists. It was said that the execution cellars were filled with prisoners awaiting the fate that came to any one even suspected of Bolshevist leanings. Strange tales were whispered fearfully of men being clubbed to death in the half-light of these cellars, beaten down groaning like cattle in the butcher's stall.

The town was buzzing now with the latest tragedy, a swift descent of a Cossack platoon on the town's largest cafe at the most crowded hour; the arrest of the Gypsy orchestra; the leading out of the condemned men before dawn, and the ending of their wild music for all time by the harsh rattle of a volley from the firing squad. Politics was a grim affair in Russia, with no quarter asked for nor granted.

Arriving in the late afternoon, Jimmy found a strange telegram from Winfield awaiting him.

"Make it snappy," it read. "Battling Heinie ready to place k. o. Ringside getting obstreperous."

From these somewhat cryptic words Jimmy rightly concluded that the Germans were moving to a knock-out blow against the Allied forces in France, that the Siberian situation was correspondingly more grave and that he must hurry if he was to save the situation for the American forces. Long ago had the Americans discovered that no ordinary code could circumvent the wily Oriental General Staff, but that the jargon of the sporting page left them gasping.

Sonia he saw to her hotel, leaving her so hastily, his mind so full of the added gravity of the situation, that he failed to notice the strangely anguished look

in her eyes as she said good-bye, and could not see the wistfulness with which she watched his hurrying figure out of sight.

He found Kalminoff at the Russian headquarters, his spare lean figure bent over a desk full of papers from which he rose, his hand nervously covering the patch over his blinded eye, his greeting to Jimmy couched in halting French.

The latter wasted no words after presenting his credentials. Briefly, in his most careful Fraser and Squair French, Jimmy outlined the purpose of his visit. He told the Ataman of the danger that lay in lack of harmony between their two forces, touched swiftly on the ominous attitude of a common ally in Siberia and the fears engendered by her actions, and argued skillfully for American and Russian cooperation at this juncture. Jimmy, ordinarily somewhat taciturn, spoke as men sometimes will when delivering a message transcending in importance their own limitations. Apprehensive of the danger that hung over his comrades and buoyed up by the hope of averting this peril, he spoke as one inspired.

Kalminoff listened gravely and silently. Before making reply he took several short turns across the floor, his hands behind his back, his brow furrowed in thought. Then he spoke.

"My friend," he said, his voice sonorous and strong in spite of his halting French, "I am beset about with enemies and with intrigue. I listen gladly to what you say concerning American desire for cooperation. I would believe you if I could. But my first duty is to my unhappy country. Frankly I am in doubt. Powerful representations have been made to me by the people whom you distrust. They have accused the Americans of favoring the Bolsheviki, whom I am endeavoring to stamp out in Siberia. Hitherto I have not believed them." He paused, looking above and beyond his listener for a space. Then dropping his gaze full into Jimmy's eyes, he raised his hand in a sweeping gesture.

"But what *can* I believe when the very American officer sent to arrange for our cooperation comes to Khabarovsk from Vladivostok accompanied by a public singer, a woman we know to be a Bolshevist spy!"

It took Jimmy some time to grasp the purport of these words. His face flushed a dull red; he stood paralyzed in thought for a space. "Why, Ataman, you must be mistaken," he gritted from clenched teeth, "I would answer for that girl with my life." But he stood swaying as a man mortally stricken.

"There is little chance of a mistake." Kalminoff watched him grimly. "And you are, if you will pardon me, a little young, and many strange things happen in Russia." The older man paced back and forth in thought. Suddenly he raised his head, then said with a kindlier air, "But we will see what we shall see and think things over. To-morrow you will perhaps come to my office again at ten o'clock?" And the Russian led him to the door, bowing politely.

Jimmy found himself in the street, his mind dazed. Over and above the turmoil of his thoughts Kalminoff's words kept tolling in his brain like a bell. Surely, surely, the man was wrong; Sonia could not be a spy for the Bolsheviki. It was impossible, outrageous, unheard of! He thought of her clear straightforward honesty, her sweetness and her innocence, her courageous spirit and lastly, with a poignant stab, the vision of her loveliness came over him. And yet—and yet, queer memories came, squidlike to blacken the clearness of his belief—her fright at the sight of Kalminoff, her unwillingness to meet Russian officers, her strange knowledge of his mission, her cryptic silences and the brooding air of mystery that surrounded her and her origin. What could it all mean? Only one person could relieve his mind, only one person could set his fears at rest. He must find Sonia immediately.

Hurrying to the hotel, he asked at the door for her. The white-bearded doorkeeper pointed out her room with a queer sidelong glance that Jimmy missed in his anguish. Like an arrow Jimmy fled up the stairs, two at a time, while the old Russian looked after him, shaking his grey head sadly.

He came to a halt at the door of the designated room, and then a new shock awaited him. For there, lounging carelessly, a cigarette hanging from his lips, his rifle across his arm, stood a Cossack sentry. The soldier straightened up at the sight of Jimmy, crossing his weapon

in front of the door. *"Nyet! nyet!"* he warned, politely but firmly.

Baffled and amazed, Jimmy stood for a second. Then, "Sonia!" he called, and again, "Sonia!" It was a half despairing cry that seemed to surge up from deep inside of him.

A pregnant silence from within the room, then a hurried movement. "What is it, Jimmee? Oh, what is it?" Her voice came through the door, with a tremor of gladness in it and a hint of tears.

"What's the matter? What does this spy business mean? Why have they arrested you. Tell me, Sonia, what is it all about?"

There was a long and ominous silence from within, a silence in which Jimmy could hear the racing of his heart, a silence that seemed to confirm his worst fears. The Cossack sentry stood, immovable and incurious.

"Please go away, Jimmee." The reply came at last in a weary heartbroken voice, filled with pain and suffering.

Jimmy clenched his fists in a desperate effort to keep a grip on himself. Then in a voice that he strove to make calm, "What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean that it is your duty to keep yourself from all suspicion. You harm yourself and endanger your mission by being near me. You must not worry about me—I am nothing—less than nothing. Please, please go away. You can see me to-night at the theater. I begged them to let me sing. They have promised to let me sing to-night. It is certain that no harm can befall me until after that. Please go away."

Blind and dizzy, Jimmy made his way into the street. He found himself near a sidewalk cafe and slumped heavily down at a table. Of a sudden the thought of the terrible delicacy of his position arose and smote him. Kalminoff wavering, even now suspicious; the American force in danger unless they could be assured of Russian support; the alien enemy watching and waiting, like a coiled snake, for a chance to strike swiftly and certainly.

And Sonia under suspicion, under arrest and in danger. Of a sudden it came over him that he loved her, loved her truly and deeply; that his place was by her side protecting her from danger, his woman, the one of all women that was to him truly desirable and truly superb.

He had been at the table he did not know how long. She said that she would be at the theater. There he would go, and, like some bewildered child, he rose and started, not knowing what to do, only feeling at that moment his great need for her and an overmastering desire to see her again.

The crowds were assembling at the theater, the greater part massed outside. He noticed dimly that the Cossacks were guarding the entrances; beyond the light of the main entrance he saw a row of lances stuck into the soil; beyond this he could hear the stamp and whinney of horses. Dimly puzzled at this show of force, he started to make his way through the crowd.

He had gone but a few paces when the people about him became agitated with some excitement. He paused irresolute and suddenly they become silent, gazing at the rear entrance of the theater. A carriage with several Cossack outriders had drawn up at the stage door. Out from it, assisted by a Cossack officer, stepped a veiled figure. With a leap of his heart he recognized Sonia's form as the shaft of light from the doorway fell on her. She disappeared within and the door shut behind her, leaving the Cossacks on guard outside.

The people around him buzzed with excitement, nodding their heads vigorously in confirmation of something. They began to press within the theater. He followed the crowd.

The first play, a typical short Russian comedy, had already started. He gazed uncomprehendingly at the brightly-clad gesticulating players on the stage. Looking about him he discovered a group of Cossack officers standing near. They were chatting away easily in French, an elegance much affected by the Russian officers, especially if they were, like so many Cossack officers, formerly of the Chevalier Guards or other regiments of the Household Cavalry.

Jimmy listened to them unconsciously, until the name "Sonia" fell on his ears. Then his attention was focussed on what they were saying.

"She will not be on until the last act," said one drawling voice. There was silence for a time. Then another voice grated unpleasantly on Jimmy's ears.

"Yes," it remarked cynically, "the

last act," with a heavy significance that sent a chill through Jimmy.

"Well," continued another, "she has enough of courage, to my thought, for it must be difficult to sing the last song knowing that death waits like a grim suitor, just beyond the darkness of the stage door."

"C'est dommage," sighed another, "for she is very young and very beautiful."

It was several seconds before Jimmy had translated these words in his own mind and grasped their sinister significance. Then ice seem to grip his heart and his breath came laboringly. Death! Sonia to be put to death! What did they mean? A growing horror took possession of his soul. Too well he knew what they meant.

Justice was grim and quick in Russia. To be suspected was equivalent to a sentence of death with these careless arbiters of destiny. His imagination working with horrible exactitude, presented him with a picture of what could happen.

He saw, in his mind's eye, the shrinking girl, the phlegmatic firing squad; heard the ringing crash of the volley; saw the sway and fall of that proud beautiful, young thing, like a flower cut down by the scythe that trembles a second in the wind before it drops to earth. He saw the approach of the officer, pistol in hand, the dull muffled note of the final despatching shot that made sure of a finished job. He saw a blanket thrown hastily over the still quivering little figure, its beauty blotted out, its golden song stilled forever. A great rage filled his soul, driving out the dull fear that had overmastered him.

The one act plays were progressing, one succeeding another without pause. Time was flying. Something must be done and done quickly. The curtain dropped to a scattering applause. A new tenseness seized upon the audience, they sat waiting and strained. The officers near Jimmy leaned forward breathlessly, their cigarettes dropping from careless fingers.

Suddenly there was an interlude. The heads of the audience turned towards the rear of the theater. Down the center aisle, looking extremely conscious of the attention they were exciting, strode four heavily-armed Cossacks, enjoying the theatrical impressiveness of their entrance as only Russians could. They took up positions near the stage in the center aisle with a clink and jingle of spurs and sabers. The people in the audience gazed at each other fearsomely. The orchestra struck up a light overture.

The curtain rose, disclosing a garden scene, bright-hued with the rioting colors of many painted flowers. The music swung imperceptibly into another air—there was a gasp from the audience, a low note of admiration, a swift quickening of the orchestral beat. Out from the wings floated, rather than walked, Sonia. She was clad in some shimmering silvery-white fabric that brought out with startling vividness the youthful beauty of her face and the lithesome grace of her figure. She seemed slightly pale, but her eyes were bright and her head held high.

Glancing over the audience as though seeking some one, her eyes encountered the four Cossacks, who, with their rifles carried across their arms, stood upright near the stage, grimly waiting for her. She recoiled a step involuntarily.

But quickly, with heightened color, she regained her composure, advanced to the footlights and made ready to sing. The audience stared at her breathlessly, nudging each other, their gaze fascinated. Nothing could be heard in the theater but the wailing throbbing notes of the violins. Jimmy felt his heart pounding and the blood rushing to his temples.

Then she sang. Her voice, clear and fresh and sweetly young, rose in a song of flowers and laughter and springtime, a song of light-hearted youth and green fields, of love and happiness. The haunting appeal of the beauty of the song and the beauty of the singer left men silent, with eyes shining. She bowed in the stillness that followed, that tense awed stillness that is a greater tribute than noisy applause, then a faint clapping of hands followed her as she disappeared in the wings to prepare for her second number. The orchestra changed its music. A mounting buzz of voices arose and then was suddenly stilled.

All eyes were directed to an empty box near the stage. The curtains parted and Kalminoff, the one-eyed, appeared.

A lightning-flash of resolution shot through Jimmy. Scribbling hastily in his notebook, he tore the leaf out and made for the outside of the theater and went around the building to where the Cossacks guarded the stage door.

To one of these men he gave the note, pressing into his hand at the same time a bundle of one-hundred ruble bills. The Cossack grinned comprehendingly and, with a murmured "*Blagadaryo vas*" of thanks for the generous reward, opened the stage door and entered.

Hurrying back, Jimmy re-entered the theater and began a slow progress through the standing crowd in the rear, toward the entrance of the box where Kalminoff sat grimly aloof, his hand nervously covering the patch on his empty eye socket. He gained the wall of the theater and was half way down the aisle that led to where the steps mounted to the box, when the curtain rose again.

The orchestra had commenced the opening bars of a new song. The music suddenly halted. Jimmy paused, startled by the sudden hush in the theater. Sonia ran lightly forward before the curtain was entirely up, holding in her hand a crumpled piece of paper. "She got my note all right," he divined swiftly.

Leaning over she spoke rapidly to the orchestra leader. He nodded, a little surprised, but turned obediently at her bidding and gave some instructions.

It seemed to Jimmy, pausing by the wall, that it was all too theatrical to be real. That the safety of the Americans in Siberia, that peace or war between two nations, that Sonia's life hung in the balance in these few fateful moments seemed impossible of belief. But the ominously waiting Cossacks in the audience were not actors. The men waiting beyond the stage door were not actors. Their rifles were real enough. He remembered that this was Russia, where life seemed always to be theatrical and even death could be bizarre.

But the orchestra had recommenced while she stood waiting, her face pale but her head held high and a look of appeal in her eyes. The opening notes of the new piece were familiar to Jimmy. It was the air that he had unconsciously begun to connect with Sonia, that haunting brave melody, the Song of Semyon.

She broke into song. She sang of Semyon with fire and with pathos, sang with a purpose, sang it out towards Jimmy, sang it with all the mystery, all the sacrifice, all the appeal that her soul could send forth through her quivering voice. The golden notes rose and fell, ringing forth the story of the man who abandoned his sweetheart to the wolves that he might be able to do his duty.

Unmistakably she was singing at Jimmy, exhorting him to leave her to her fate, to attempt nothing that would imperil his mission and the safety of his army.

He was shaken with the tensity of her appeal, shaken anew by the realization that he was failing miserably in his duty as an officer. He wavered momentarily, so powerful was the effect of her voice. But only for a moment. Thoughts of country, duty, loyalty, seemed remote and unreal, of no importance in face of that greater thing, the fact that he loved her and that she was in danger, and in face of the soul-disturbing knowledge that the world would be a bleak, grey wilderness with her no longer in it.

The audience fell under her spell, fell entranced. In spite of the air of nameless dread that lay over the place, in spite of the brooding note of tragedy that hung like a pall over the theater, in spite of the indefinable horror that quivered like the rushing of unseen wings in the air, the souls of those Russian people rose within them at the magic of her voice and with a mighty shout they sprang to their feet and broke into the crashing chorus of the Song of Semyon, until the roof seemed fairly to lift with the surge and thunder of their voices. The music ended. A few scattering shouts and the theater was silent, men sat down, leaning forward expectantly.

In the hush following the outburst the four Cossacks moved towards the stage. With a sound that was half a groan and half a sob the audience watched them spellbound. Jimmy suddenly woke from the enchantment cast by her voice. Galvanized into life, his heart beating, he hurried towards Kalminoff's box, pushed aside the curtains and entered, his face pale but his eyes flashing.

The four Cossacks had clambered up on the stage with much rattling of accoutrement and much clicking of spur chains. From the wings appeared the officer in charge of the firing squad, fol-

lowed by several more of his men. The Cossack officer, a heavy-faced, tall, loose-jointed individual, placed his hand on Sonia's arm preparatory to leading her off the stage, out of the light and the life, down into the darkness and the death that waited beyond the stage door.

She had stood, pale and brave, until the hand of the officer touched her arm. Then she shrank; a quick look of horror came into her face, but quickly collecting herself, her head went up proudly again. Suddenly her sweeping eyes saw Jimmy standing in Kalminoff's box. She stopped transfigured. Her face lit up with a sudden swift, glorious radiance. For one delirious second Jimmy gazed into her very soul, shining forth to greet him across the footlights. Her whole being was concentrated in that look, all thought of the silent audience, all thought of the waiting Cossacks, all thought of the world about her, forgotten, as though there existed no one in the world but Jimmy, standing there, his eyes shining with a new light. Then suddenly realization of what awaited her stabbed like a quick thrust lance and she shrank back, faltering and trembling, gazing wild-eyed and frightened at the men who surrounded her.

In that swift second Jimmy's resolution hardened into chilled steel. "Kalminoff," his voice rang out over the theater, "that girl is my wife. As an officer of the army of the United States of America, I forbid the murder of an American citizen by your forces."

The audience, impelled by the ring in Jimmy's voice, turned its eyes from where Sonia stood on the stage to the box where Kalminoff had risen, paling, to face Jimmy—Jimmy who waited as grimly certain and ominous as fate itself.

The lean little Cossack was startled and amazed, forgetting even his sensitiveness about the patch-covered eye. "What—what is it that you say?" he stammered, turning a perplexed look on Sonia, then back to Jimmy again.

"I repeat, Ataman, that Sonia is my wife, and I forbid your murder of an American citizen, an offense against the honor and dignity of the nation to whose army I belong." And Jimmy's hand dropped quietly and unostentatiously to the butt of his pistol, the great army forty-five which hung at his hip. Kalminoff's eye paused for a second on the hand resting on the open flap of the holster. He bowed courteously.

"Of a surety, if she is your wife then she is an American citizen and shall go unharmed." Turning swiftly to the stage, he barked something at the waiting Cossacks. They drew back, the waiting officer saluted and gave some muffled order to his men. They clumped stolidly off the stage, gazing up a little curiously at the tableau in the box above them.

The audience, grasping the significance of the retiring Cossacks, started a low murmuring wave of sound, which rose higher into an excited buzzing. Men began to applaud, shouts arose and the stamping of feet, until the crash on crash of deep-throated cheers shook the very walls. Sonia, calm and collected, bowed at the wild tumult before her as though at the end of a successful song, and still bowing slowly, retired from the stage.

How Jimmy got there he never knew but it seemed but a second before he was on the stage and back in the darkness of the wings.

A beloved voice thrilled from the shadows, a warm palpitating form half laughing, half crying, was in his arms, whispering faint endearments, sobbing with joy. "Oh, Jimmee, my heart was heavy within me when I tried to drive you to your duty." Her voice trembled as she nestled closer into his encircling arms, her heart beating wildly, her hands fluttering like the wings of an over-driven bird. Everything on earth seemed to recede and there was none but these two, clinging to each other.

A touch on Jimmy's arm and he turned to find Kalminoff gazing at him, a kindly twinkle in his eye and an understanding smile on his face.

"Young man," he said, "I play the pokair myself and I like the good bluff. You Americans play the good pokair. Tell your commander that I and my Russians are with him in any game that will be played." And he was gone, leaving Jimmy with the relief of a vast burden suddenly rolled off his shoulders.

"Jimmee," whispered Sonia, tremulous, plucking at his bronze buttons, "I am not a Bolshevik spy. Kalminoff's men executed my father two days before I met you. I came here to kill him. But that is all over now." And she sank happily into his arms, like a child, tired with too much excitement.

AMMONIA FOR BURNS

A Short Story

By BESSIE A. FICKLEN

"I HAVE just had some good advice from a doctor's wife," said Nan.

The two young doctors looked up from their low-voiced discussion of a point in medical ethics.

"What was that?"

Nan's delicate, serious face twinkled. "Never to marry a doctor."

Dick, to whom the subject was still abstract, responded with a grin; but Enoch, who was engaged to Nan — off and on — looked at her with straight lips and his funny one-sided frown.

"And why?" asked Dick, with his grave air of the scientific investigator.

"She gave many reasons," Nan answered as gravely.

"Much difference a hundred reasons would make to you," put in Isabel, her sympathetic eye on Enoch's frown.

Nan smiled at Enoch. "Of course there are a hundred reasons. But," magnanimously, "I don't mind most of them — hard work, and hard hours, and poor pay, and unpaid bills, and contagious diseases ——"

"And lovely lady patients," murmured Isabel, "in pale pink Georgette ——"

"Oh, that's all right — if they pay their bills," Nan chuckled. "That's all in the day's work. But my quarrel with doctors is another matter." A tense note came into her voice and something like severity into the child-like softness of her eyes as they turned on Enoch, to hold him responsible for the entire medical profession.

"Go on," he dared her.

"Well, it is your red tape."

"Oh, red tape!" he grumbled.

"Yes," Nan continued, "you are tied up in red tape — hand and foot and tongue — all of you, until you are too cautious to breathe."

"Oh, Lord!" Enoch growled, unduly exasperated; as if Nan were prodding a sore spot — as if red tape were the red rag to his mad bull.

"Come, now," Dick took up Nan's challenge, "We admit the red tape, more than is necessary, perhaps. And at times it does cramp the old Doc's style; but why it should destroy his wife ——?"

"I'll tell you why." Nan's eyes defied Enoch as she advanced upon, evidently, a familiar battle-ground. "I mean I will illustrate." She hurried on eagerly. "In my family we have made a great discovery — *that ammonia is a cure for burns!*"

She paused and her gaze shifted uneasily from Dick to Enoch's bent head, then steadied back upon Dick.

"Ammonia?" he asked, incredulously.

Enoch looked up with a smile that was little better than a display of gritted teeth. He swallowed back another "Oh, Lord!" and jumped to his feet, but he spoke with self-control, diplomatically.

"Isn't it supper time?"

"No — hold on." Dick stopped him to question Nan. "You say *ammonia?* For *burns?*"

"Let's eat and then talk burns," Enoch begged, but Dick shouted him down.

"No. Wait a minute. What's the hurry? Trying to keep me out of this discovery? I want to hear, now, anything new about burns." And he showed a thick angry scar that ran up his wrist. "Remember I am especially keen." Then to Nan, "Ammonia? A *cure?*"

Nan, encouraged, ardently took up her tale.

"A great-aunt of mine——"

Here Enoch melted away into the little kitchen of the flat. Nan's eyes followed him for a moment only. Ignoring faint tinkles of tin and glass and low whistled strains of the Barcarolle — well known as Enoch's safety valve — she proceeded with her story.

A great-aunt of Nan's had once burned herself very painfully, and having no soda — her usual remedy — she used the only other alkali at hand, which happened to be household ammonia. The relief was so sudden and the cure

so quick and so perfect, that she published her experience to family and friends. Since then there was a history of wonderful cures — or, rather, a tradition; for, as far as Nan knew, no word of the discovery had ever appeared in print; nor had any physician taken it seriously enough to experiment and try to prove or disprove the ammonia cure.

Wierd and ominous hissed the low-whistled Barcarolle. Nan, with a reproachful flash toward the kitchen, kept on.

She, personally, had never been especially impressed with the legend, until she had taken part in one miraculous cure and been twice healed herself.

First she saw the case of another venerable aunt, who had a way of haunting the kitchen and with her own hands preparing her own very particular diet. One day Auntie upset her pot of boiling chicken soup all over her hand. At the alarm Nan ran with the rest of the family. They found the poor lady twisting with agony in spite of all the cook's remedies of soda and flour and oil. But among the family was a brave soldier, who, it happened, had just learned the ammonia tradition. Auntie's suffering made her desperate and eager for any remedy. So he tried ammonia on her. Her instant blissful relief and continued freedom from pain were so evident that no one present could remain a doubter. Especially when, after being bound up in vaseline over night, the burned hand appeared next morning completely cured and not even red.

"But your own experience. Give us that," Dick demanded keenly, as though he were conducting a case in court.

Soon after Auntie's fire-test of ammonia came Nan's first personal experience. She had struck a match and had likewise lit it, but hearing no noise and being unaccustomed to silent matches, she reversed the stick without looking, grasped the burning end, and tried vigorously to strike the blank end. Before she realized that she was burned the blazing head glued itself into her finger and, when she finally got rid of it, left a deep scarred spot that hurt intensely. But, mindful of Auntie's cure, Nan made straight for the household ammonia. The finger was promptly immersed and the pain disappeared, to come no more. The burn became merely a painless little lump of dry white skin that, in a few days, fell off and left no mark.

Nan's eyes appealed to Dick. "Good!" he nodded, "Go on."

Isabel, catching Nan's enthusiasm, dived into the kitchen and returned with Enoch. But Nan kept her eyes on Dick. She told him how her own zeal and her championship of the cause dated from her latest experience. Recently, in a queer fit of absentmindedness, she had poured a kettleful of boiling water — instead of into the teapot — over her own hand!

She shuddered at the memory of her sudden agony. She still marvelled — found it hard to believe — how instantly, at the first dip of her hand into ammonia, she was free from pain; and how next morning the hand was completely cured, with not even the faintest tenderness nor pinkness to show where the burn had been.

Nan ended on a note of triumph. She had brought a glow to Dick's face.

"Hooray!" applauded Dick. "That sounds tremendous to me." But then Dick caught Enoch's eye fixed curiously upon him. "Here, Enoch, burn me once again. Let me try this out," he ended airily, extending his scarred wrist.

Enoch frowned at Dick's flippancy which Nan was taking too seriously.

"But would you believe that Enoch," said Nan, gazing at her man with a world of reproach in her dark eyes, "though I have told him all of this, over and over, Enoch will not lift one finger!"

Enoch, at last given a chance to air his side of the case, addressed Dick solemnly. "Of course I am pleased to death with Nan's cures; and of course I believe everything she says—as far as her observa——" He glanced at Nan who was stiffening. "I mean to me it sounds all right, and I am ready to prove my belief. If I ever get burned I shall anoint my burn with ammonia." An injured note came into his voice. "But this means nothing to her. You can't guess what she wants me to do."

Nan's cheeks flushed a deeper pink. "Only to write a paper," she explained.

Enoch added, "Yes. To write a paper about her family experiences and publish it — by force if necessary — in the

American Medical Journal; and read it, by force, before the American Medical Association! And in the meantime I am to go about button-holing all the big surgeons and instructing them as to what my girl's family did when they got burned. Haw-haw!" Enoch's jeering laugh was a faint expression of his inward squirming before this loathsome picture. Nan gazed at him unsmiling.

Dick, seeing Nan's smouldering eyes, bit back his own smile and spoke to her guardedly. "Of course to write a paper, you know, he first needs hundreds—or thousands—of cases that he himself has observed in every detail."

"As I keep on telling her," moaned Enoch.

Nan confronted him. "And how are you to get hundreds of cases if nobody cares enough about it even to begin?"

"But," said Dick soothingly, "we did a lot about curing burns during the war, you know. That paraffine treatment——" he appealed to her, but she took no notice.

"Nan knows about that," put in Isabel, "but she claims——"

"My business is the every day burning," Nan spoke gloomily, "of people at home, or at work — children who play in the fire, or upset the wash-boiler, and get burned, sometimes burned to death or poisoned to death by those mysterious burn poisons Enoch has told me about — or who suffer and suffer, and get infected, and have open sores for thirty years — or get cancer from it. I know nothing about the deep burns that char flesh and bones. That's where the doctors must experiment. And, Enoch," she turned to him, "You yourself told me paraffine cannot be used in a hurry at home; nor even by a doctor, unless he is an expert, with drying apparatus and sprays and things. I have seen already a doctor fail with that, and a woman die." Her voice became tragic. "And still you will do nothing about ammonia," she glanced at Dick, "None of you."

Enoch brooded sullenly.

Nan spoke to Dick. "I am going to tell you something I have not admitted before — even to Enoch. You see, I made up my mind that the public has got to be told about ammonia — one way or another. So, when I saw that I could not interest Enoch——"

"Nan!" Enoch started an impassioned protest — then stopped short.

Nan's eyes softened as she smiled at him. "I only mean you are not interested as much as I. Truly, Enoch, you know I never really blame you. I know too much to blame a busy doctor. And I know how a young doctor is handicapped." Her voice pleaded with him. "But all the same I could not give up. I had to find some one who could take hold and experiment." She turned back to Dick. "So I wrote out carefully all I have told you. I even got those who had been present to swear to my own teakettle case. Then I was trying in vain to get this published when I suddenly remembered the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Just the place! So I wrote to them."

"You wrote to the Rockefeller Institute?" chorused the two young doctors.

"What did you write?" demanded Dick.

"Everything, I bet!" Enoch lifted his hands to Heaven.

"Oh, no," Nan reassured him. "I'll tell you all I said. I wrote them" — she screwed up her eyes to concentrate her memory — "that I had seen a number of remarkable cures of burns, of the first and second degree, by ordinary household ammonia; that I had written a short account of several cases which I had personally witnessed from beginning to end, and that I wished to send this to some authority who might care to read it. I only asked them to give me the address of any expert who had a special interest in burns, because I was anxious to have this treatment investigated, and, if found to be as valuable as it had proved to be in our experience, to have it given to the public by the proper authorities. So they shouldn't suspect any *motive,* I added that I was not seeking pay, nor to have my name appear, only to give relief to burn sufferers. And I enclosed references, and also an addressed and stamped envelope. Now! Could I have been more business-like — and reasonable?"

"Did they answer?" asked Dick.

"I will show you their answer."

Nan went over to her desk and began opening drawers and rummaging. Enoch jumped up. Isabel rose too, but made for the kitchen, saying, "It is time I started my rarebit."

"Surely." Nan agreed. "I'll be there in one —— Ah! Here is the letter." She handed to Dick an official document.

Enoch came to look over Dick's shoulder. The letter was brief. Under its imposing heading—*"The Hospital of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research"*—were these few words, which Dick read aloud.

"Dear Madam:

I regret to say that we cannot be of assistance to you. We know of no laboratory where the remedy you speak of might be investigated, nor have we facilities here for undertaking such an investigation. It is barely possible that some of the surgeons connected with Bellevue Hospital, this city, might be interested.

Very truly yours,
——— Resident Physician."

Both young doctors looked grave, and, for the moment, both kept quiet and neither looked at the other.

Nan spoke wistfully. "Of course there was no use in *my* trying to interest the busy Bellevue surgeons—a nobody like me— when even those doctors that I know personally ——"

Dick nodded, "Of course."

Nan stared at him with big eyes, reproachfully, then flamed.

"You say, 'Of course!' but when I read, every day, in every paper that I pick up, about poor creatures burned and in torture — I get desperate! Because I *believe* in this remedy!" She calmed herself and finished quietly. "But it does seem strange. Not a doctor, not even your research institute, with one spark of interest in a possible cure for burns! It's red tape." She shook her head sadly. "I am sure you both would be interested — otherwise. Oh, I know doctors must be cautious, but ——"

"I should say!" spoke Enoch heartily, grateful for any concession. "Got to be, Nan — more cautious than you'd ever guess. Besides all the quacks and fakirs, do you know that practically every old lady on earth has her own sure cures that she would like to compel us to adopt?"

Nan smiled at Enoch. "But aren't there among these cures some few that might——" At his impatient shrug, she laughed. "I suppose doctors are fed up on home remedies." She paused, thoughtful, then appealed to him. "You know, I love doctors. I mean——" she added hastily.

"Ha-ha!" put in Isabel.

Ignoring Isabel, Nan spoke earnestly to Enoch and Dick.

"You have chosen this hard life, poorly paid, driving, terrible work, because you feel the suffering — you must do something, help ——"

Dick grinned, "Well, some of us ——"

"All that count," Nan insisted. "That beautiful Hippocratic Oath at your graduation. I saw it in your faces."

Dick bowed.

Nan glowed. "I believe those graduates, all of them, would have cheered a possible cure for burns." With a little sigh she added softly, "Before their practice, so regulated and tied up by red tape, had choked that spirit."

Dick bristled up. "Some of the birds keep some of the spirit. Take the steady little stream of meds that keep on tackling and steadily being destroyed by every beastly infection and invention known to man. Take the fellow, for instance, who, to test his belief that it's not contagious, cuts open his arm and sews up in his raw flesh a piece of a malignant growth."

"Oh, yes," Nan responded with fervor, "I know. He was brave! Doctors must be brave. And he believed, and he had the courage of his belief." She paused thoughtfully. "He was wise too. A demonstration like that has got to be heard — cuts through red tape."

She stood and straightened to her full height, her head tilted up. And suddenly she smiled to herself. Then she turned to the men. "Come, I am done with all my grievances. Doctors are the finest things in the world! I have always known that. So let's have supper."

"Come and help," called Isabel, quick to encourage a return to normal.

They crowded into the little kitchen and were put to work, slicing bread, and opening bottles and eggs for the elaborate old Virginia rarebit. The receipt had been handed down in Isabel's family for generations, she said, and it was warranted not to harm a young baby.

But it called for Worcester sauce, tomato catsup, red pepper, eggs, beer and everything else, as well as much labor and watching, and stirring just so.

And this cheese, it seemed, though not quite leathery, was — well, there were anxious moments that kept Isabel and both men busy and boisterous.

Nan put on the water to boil for tea, made toast, and crisped the soda biscuits, but she did not join as usual in the jokes. In her eyes was a brooding look that Enoch tried in vain to laugh away.

When the first tense period — with the bubbling cheese, hovering — as Enoch's old mammy would say, "twixt Oh Lawd, and Thank Gawd!" and demanding oblations of egg after egg — when this was over, and they knew beyond a doubt that the rarebit would be creamy and right, Enoch's uneasiness asserted itself.

He spoke to Dick formally, "Of course, you must know, I have promised Nan to do my best — to test out her ammonia cure whenever I have a good chance. And if I collect enough such cases"—he hesitated—"I may try to get some of my friends to—to take it up with me."

"I'll keep it in mind," answered Dick politely. "Be sure to let me know when there's anything doing."

Nan interrupted, "But that's enough. We are through with it now," she insisted.

Enoch, however, could not bear the thought that something was rankling in the heart of his dear one. He kept on. "You know I do sympathize with your point, Nan. It does seem a pity, sometimes, not to get quicker action. Of course our great trouble is the quacks. They are always announcing fake cures. But there should be some way — especially with burns. People are so devilish ignorant and foolish about burns. I saw sickening cases when I was an interne at The Charity." He squinted somberly. "One day, out with the ambulance, we found a poor girl, not fatally burned, but dead — literally smothered to death. The fools had rolled her up, head and all, in rugs and comforts until she was a great tight bundle, and on top of her sat a big fat policeman!"

Dick scowled heavily. Nan hid her eyes.

"Enoch!" Isabel protested. "You nearly ruined my beautiful rarebit. Hush up till it's done."

Nan lifted her head from her hands. "Yes, hush up!" she joined in, ungratefully. "And please, Enoch, don't bother any more about my cure." She waved her hands grandly. "I am the one who knows it and believes in it. It is simply my affair. I have decided." She clasped her hands to dismiss the subject, then turned to the teakettle. "How about tea?" She asked Isabel. "The water is boiling like Tophet."

"Wait — one minute," said Isabel.

"But, Nan, it is my affair, too," Enoch persisted. "Any day I may find a chance to — experiment. So don't give up."

"Oh no, I shan't give up." Nan smiled mysteriously.

Enoch looked at her, puzzled. "What could you do?"

"Suppose it is a secret?"

"Not from me."

"Suppose you didn't approve?"

Enoch grew more intense. "The very reason for consulting me. You surely would consult me first?"

"Oh, hush fussing and make the tea." Isabel ordered.

With a last glance of saucy defiance, Nan turned from Enoch to her tea-making. She scalded the teapot, put in a pinch of tea for each one present and one for the pot, then filled it from the steaming, spurting kettle.

"Shall I turn off the gas?" asked Enoch.

"No, wait —!" Nan grabbed his arm as she carefully put down the teapot. Something in her voice made Enoch look at her sharply. He saw her eyes lifted to the shelf above her, to the large bottle of ammonia that sat there conspicuously; he watched them glancing from that to the kettle, then to her hand — her left hand which she was doubling up. And he saw her right hand stealing out toward the fiercely steaming kettle.

She suddenly knew that he was watching and relaxed. "Look, Enoch. Look how they are gobbling up the rarebit."

But Enoch was not to be diverted. "Oh, no, my dear, you are not going to do it," he whispered, putting his hand tight over hers.

Nan jerked her hand away and glared at him.

"Enoch Mason! I am not married to

you, and I am not going to be if you think you can tyrannize."

"All right, Nan," Enoch answered in a low voice. "But I see what you are up to, and I am not going to allow you to be so foolish."

"Not foolish!" Nan defended herself so hotly her voice was no longer inaudible to the other two.

"I have made up my mind to — to a certain thing, and you can't possibly stop me."

"I know, you infant. You've made up your mind to burn yourself!" Enoch's voice rose.

"And you can't stop me!" Nan blazed out — a Crusader, a Joan of Arc. "I am going to demonstrate this thing, sooner or later, to some doctor or doctors, the more the better. You may choose if you'll be present or not."

Enoch threw up his hands, calling heaven to witness her folly.

"But I tell you it is no risk," she protested. "Haven't I already proved that?"

Enoch smiled grimly. "All right," he said, "if it is no risk." And before Nan could call out he had lifted the kettle and poured the last drop of the spitting steam and water over the back of his left hand. Conquering his involuntary spasm, he replaced the kettle and turned off the gas. "Now we will see," he said. "Get your ammonia."

"Enoch!" Nan cried in terror, catching his arm as her legs gave way beneath her.

"I am all right, dear. Glad to try it." Enoch panted contritely. "But quick! Let's get to work." He handed her the bottle of ammonia. His chin set, his hands clenched, but making a visible effort, he relaxed, grinned, and began his low whistling of the Barcarolle.

Dick seized the injured hand and pushed away the ammonia. "Get soda, lime-water, flour," he commanded. "And quick! Telephone the drug store to rush ——"

Nan came to life and took orders abjectly. "Yes — telephone?" she gasped.

But "No—no!" shouted Enoch. "Ammonia! Ammonia and nothing else. Quick, Nan." He bit his lips.

Dick drew back, offended and distressed. With shaking hands Nan poured undiluted ammonia from the bottle over the poor hand, which was blazing red and was swelling angrily.

"Ow!" grunted Enoch. "A little water—don't you think?"

Nan, all panicky, pulled his arm across the sink and turned over his hand a spout of cold water. But this plunged him into such instant torture that, with one dismayed look at his convulsed face, she rose above her panic into a sudden white calm and self-possession.

"Oh, forgive me, Enoch!" she begged. "I was rattled. But now I'll cure you." She turned to the china shelves and selected a small bowl. With steady precision she poured this half full of ammonia and added a very little water.

Dick, keeping tight hold on himself, watched Nan with murderous eyes. For Enoch, now, was white to his lips, his brow beaded with a cold sweat. Nan took the rigid hand tenderly and immersed it in her bowl. "Now, does that hurt you more or less?" she asked, as if her life depended on his answer.

Enoch's face suddenly lost its strain—relaxed. He opened his eyes and stared at his hand in the bowl, dazed, then puzzled. "Why it—it has stopped hurting!" He announced, in a small, awed voice. "Instantly. The moment you put it in that bowl, it stopped!"

"Aw come!" grunted Dick, sceptically.

"It doesn't sting?" Nan questioned Enoch. "If it does I can make the ammonia stronger, or weaker."

"Not a pang—not a sting!" said Enoch wondering. "You have hit it precisely." He patted her shoulder. "Good child! It was hurting like tarnation, but now, all at once, I haven't an atom of pain."

"Take it out and try." Dick suggested—Dick the investigator, his eyes boring into Enoch like microscopes. "Try whether it is not a coincidence. Maybe it stopped of itself—or it wasn't much of a burn—though it looked——"

"Yow!" Enoch howled. He had lifted his hand out of the ammonia, but he grabbed the bowl and plunged his hurt in with a deep sigh of relief. "Oh what bliss—bliss!" he exclaimed, looking resentfully at Dick.

"Is that honest?" Dick cross-questioned. "Did it really hurt like that?"

"Like hell-fire!" snapped Enoch. "You think I'd howl for nothing?"

"Oh, well," Dick jeered, "then it still hurts some, but you will not admit it."

"You poor chump!" Enoch jeered back. "I am now absolutely free from pain."

"Take it out again." Dick dared him.

"Will you please leave his hand in the ammonia," Nan ordered Dick fiercely, "until it is cured?"

Enoch was broadly, blissfully smiling, and "How about supper," he begged, "for a starving man?"

"It's ready." Isabel replied.

She and Nan gloated over the wounded knight, and escorted him with pomp to a seat where his bowl could rest on the table, with his hand comfortably suspended in its healing bath. The two girls, and even Dick, made haste to serve Enoch, and rejoiced to see how he ate serenely, with undisturbed appetite.

But Nan could not eat, and she would allow no mention of Enoch's deed. Her eyes went back and forth from his burned hand to his face, and it was strange how, as the miraculous cure became more and more assured, she became more and more gloomy.

When Enoch complained that the unburned surface was smarting from the ammonia, Nan cautiously lifted his hand from the bowl. There was no doubt now. All could see the burn was healed. It was no longer painful to the touch, and the skin, that had seemed puffed and blistered, seemed now, except for its redness, perfectly normal. Enoch poked and prodded and pinched it. There was no blistering, no rawness, hardly any tenderness. He and Dick crouched over it almost quivering with interest. Dick's sharp eyes devoured Enoch's hand, then Enoch's face.

"I cannot believe it," Enoch sighed.

"Me neither," Dick grunted.

Enoch turned on Dick. "What do you mean by that? You saw it was a genuine burn? You see now it is cured?"

"No, it is not. Not yet." Nan put in firmly, taking the hand away from the doctors. Tenderly she dressed it with vaseline from a tube, swathed it in white tissue paper, then tied it up in a soft-linen handkerchief—one of the dozen she was embroidering with Enoch's initials. "Keep it on until morning," she directed. "Then it will be well, I promise. But now go home and go to bed."

Enoch frowned. There were almost tears in Nan's voice. Why? He grasped her hand and burst out with, "But first, Nan, and all of you, I wish I could tell you how wonderful, how immense it was. You saved my hand, Nan, you and your ammonia. And you are brave."

Nan shrank back. "No!" she cried.

"Yes! You believed—you knew this fact, and you would not give up. You were determined to prove your belief, if you had to—to boil yourself." He laughed. "Well, you have converted me. You have got one doctor on your list. Or a piece of one," he added modestly, "just beginning, no weight, but ready to start the fight." He frowned and added, "Somehow." He was puzzled. After all, how? Then he grinned. "I think I will begin on you, Dick. Do you swear you are convinced? You bone-head! If you dare to look sceptical——" With a quick movement of his right arm he hugged Dick and gripped him, his arms to his sides. "Swear you are convinced or I am going to hold you and scald you until you howl for ammonia."

Dick wriggled away. "Come off! I don't want to hurt your burn."

Nan interfered. "Enoch!" she begged, "Please not any roughhouse tonight. And"—her voice shaking—"never say ammonia to me again. Of course it was all my fault, but I can't bear to think how crazy—how wicked you were to act like that. Your precious surgeon's hand! To risk ruining it forever—just because a silly girl——"

Enoch was too amazed to answer more than just—"Nan!"

"You doctors are so—reckless!"

"I thought we were too cautious."

"It frightens me to think," Nan whimpered, "what you might——"

But here Isabel was inspired. "Come help me wash up," she called to Dick, and firmly led him into the kitchen. There they made a cheerful clatter that quite covered Nan's little attack of tears, and Dr. Enoch's awkward and old-fashioned, but quite successful, treatment.

As the two men were leaving, Enoch sang out to Nan: "By the way, Dick and I are going over to Dr. Martin's clinic to-morrow."

"No! What do you mean?" protested Dick.

"Yes, sir!" Enoch called back, "I am going to show my hand, and old Dick—*to testify!*"

THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

By CHARLES WESLEY SANDERS

Illustrated by Eugene Cassady

The Story So Far:

SAM RAINEY from Texas comes to town with a thousand dollars, but loses it in a game of poker to

DORSEY, DELANA AND STYERS, a suspicious trio whose secret meeting place is discovered by Rainey. He is about to look in a box in the attic when they approach, but he escapes safely and goes back to his hotel to await the behest of

THE GIRL IN BLUE who refuses to disclose her identity. She is a mysterious and lovely person and Rainey has promised her to do whatever she wishes. He is called from luncheon by a telephone call, supposedly from her, and when he returns his coffee has a strange taste.

FORGETTING his hat, his check and his tip to the romantic waitress, Sam rose and got out into the lobby. It was a queer sort of place now, that lobby. It stretched so far away that Sam could not see the end of it and it was filled with figures that swayed and reeled. Sam had been drunk only once in his life, but if he had not known better he would have said he was drunk now. And he was getting drunker every minute, if that was the way to describe his condition. He was afraid that darkness was going to fall on him and he veered round so that he faced the desk.

He swayed toward it, took two uncertain steps, toppled toward a chair and sank into it. Instantly he was the center of a confused throng. He thought he was among thousands of people, though there were only a dozen. Then the face of the room clerk defined itself. The face bent down so that it was close to Sam's. The clerk was a haughty person, but he cherished the reputation of the house he served.

"Drunk?" he asked sharply.

Sam waved a hand in feeble denial. Then the face of the pretty and romantic waitress was beside the clerk's.

"He isn't drunk," she said hotly. "He was all right just a minute or two ago. *I* think he's been poisoned."

Sam thought so, too, now that he thought of it at all. He was beginning to feel dog-gone sick. The floor under his feet had an uneasy fashion of billowing up and settling down like a carpet under which the wind blows. Head and stomach were awhirl.

"Here, boys," said the clerk, and his tone was different now.

If some one had been poisoned in the hotel, it was something to cover up. He could be contemptuous toward a drunken man, but he could not be contemptuous toward a poisoned man. A poisoned man sort of had the edge on a haughty clerk and on the house as well.

Two bell-hops came running.

"Get under his shoulders and help him to his room," the clerk ordered. "I'll get the doctor."

It was well for Sam and for the two bell-hops that Sam had reservoirs of strength, else they would never have got his two hundred pounds to his room. At first his legs seemed to have a notion that they would only sprawl, but he finally commanded them to their regular task and with the help of the boys got to the elevator. There he sank down on the operator's stool. At his floor he wavered and staggered till he succeeded in reaching his room. The boys let him flop down on the bed and Sam, for the first time in his life, suffered some one else to help him off with his outer clothing.

What happened after that was not recorded in Sam's mind. He had times of falling into black depths and struggling up to gray mists. The doctor pushed at least ten yards of inch-thick

rubber hose down his throat and after that he seemed to go to sleep. When he awoke the sun was shining into the room. A heavy-set but loose-jointed man was sitting by the side of the bed. Sam looked at him and blinked.

"How you-all feelin'?" the big man asked.

"Dry like a desert wind," said Sam. "Is there any ice in the world?"

"I guess the doc knowed you would be thirsty when you woke up," the man said. "This is the sixth plate of cracked ice that's been ready for you. You was expected to wake up in three-four hours. You've slept about ten."

"Who put me out?" Sam asked, for the events of the evening before were hazy.

"Somebody dropped some dope into your coffee," the man said. "It was enough to have killed you, the doc said. It would have killed you if your stummick had been empty. On'y the fact that you had just et a full meal saved you. The dope didn't get in its work before the doc went after you. Close shave, at that."

" Hair cut, too, from the way I feel," Sam said.

"They are lookin' for one of the bell-boys," the man pursued. "He's the fella that went callin' you to go to the phone. The girl that waited on you said he passed by your table after he called a man that isn't noways registered in the hotel. Just a stall, that was. But they ain't found that bell-hop and won't, I reckon. Who called you on the phone, Rainey?'

Sam took advantage of his mouthful of ice; he juggled it around and then into his cheek before he answered.

"Who are you?" he temporized.

"Battles is my name," the man said. "I'm the sheriff. The manager of the hotel was for puttin' the gag on this business but sooner or later I hear what's goin' on. I been waitin' here since midnight to get first crack at your story."

"It was a woman called me to the phone," Sam said.

"What woman?"

"Dogged if I know."

"Didn't she give you her name?"

"She didn't," said Sam, and thought it unnecessary to say that the woman had identified herself as some one else.

"Well, that was a stall," Battles said. "They just wanted to get you away from the table so's they could dope your coffee. Now, there's something back of this, young fella. Who's after you? Who've you had a run-in with in this town lately?"

Sam eyed the officer intently. He knew that there were sheriffs and sheriffs. Some were good, some were bad, some were indifferent. He wanted to classify Battles. He saw a square, rough-hewn face, a pair of clear blue eyes which looked at him steadily. He reckoned the sheriff could be rated as "good."

"Sheriff," said Sam, "you ain't sizing me up any too good, are you? Do you suppose I'm going to turn this matter over to the law? If I got a fight on my hands, I'm going to fight it out by myself."

"Where you from?" the sheriff demanded.

"Over in the Panhandle."

The sheriff screwed up his eyes. He regarded the long form which lay under the covers and then his eyes rested on Sam's face.

" They's been too much skulduggery in this neck of the woods lately," he said. "That's why I come to see you. They's been some robberies and a murder or two and hold-ups and one thing and another, and I ain't got nowhere especially with any of 'em. I thought mebbe this business you been figgerin' in would give me a lead."

"Sorry I can't help you, sheriff," Sam said.

"You a gun-toter?" the sheriff asked.

"It's the rule that a man can carry a gun when he goes on a long ride," Sam evaded.

"It's also the rule that he puts his gun away when he comes into this man's town," Battles said. "I'm just givin' you a hint, son."

For a moment Sam lay looking at the grizzled veteran of the law. Then he had a hunch. It looked like a solution of his problem. The sheriff had not needed to give him this warning. He had himself recognized the hazard of going armed.

"How you fixed for men, sheriff?" he asked.

"Deputies?"

"Yeh."

Sam reached up and pulled the curtains from their hangings, and revealed the face of a youth of twenty-four.

"I could use another man."

"Pick me."

"Huh," the sheriff said, 'anybody'd think pickin' a deputy was like pickin' blackberries off'n a bush. Well, it ain't. I got to know what a man is before he works for me."

"You can wire to the sheriff back in my country an' ask him about me," Sam said. "He has offered me a job as deputy before this."

"And you didn't take it," said the sheriff shrewdly. 'But you'd take a job with me. You've got an ax to grind, son. What brought you to this part of the country, anyhow?"

"I come on pleasure bent," Sam replied. "I drew me a thousand from the bank and rode in on a railroad train."

"An' mebbe," the sheriff hazarded, "somebody nicked you for that thousand."

"I got every cent of that thousand 'ceptin what I have spent for room an' board et cetery," Sam declared.

The sheriff scratched his rough chin for awhile, his head uptilted. Then he looked long at Sam again.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, fella," he said at last. "I'll just make you a deputy. I'll wire that sheriff an' see what kind of a recommend he gives you. If he throws you down, you better look out for me. I'll blow you to pieces."

"You won't blow me to pieces on any wire you get from that sheriff," Sam asserted. "He *knows* me."

"You got stren'th enough to hold up your right hand?" the sheriff asked.

Sam held up his right hand. The sheriff made a deputy out of him in due form.

"Gosh, that makes me feel good," Sam said. "Now I can go about my business all legal."

"You-all look-a-here," the sheriff said sternly. "I don't want you to take this business as no cheerful matter. I want you to take it as a solemn matter because that's what it is. You are goin' to have plenty to do an' you may find that it will be more than plenty. I'm goin' to send you over to Orchid City to clean things up over there."

"Where is this here Orchid City?" Sam asked.

"It's out the road here a piece, ragtown, just sprung into life the last few months, since they struck oil over there. Them guys has got a notion they are livin' in Alaska or Alabama or some of them places. They are drinkin' too much white mule an' doin' too much fancy gamblin'. It'll be your job to stop all that or most of it. O'course a friendly game of poker——"

"Yeh," said Sam, "poker is a nice, friendly game. Well, sheriff, don't you send me over to that city till you hear from the sheriff I've mentioned. That will take you three-four days. Then you will know I'm right. In the meantime I'll just hang around here an' get my feet under me and see what the lay of the land is. I'm goin' to be weak somethin' awful when I get up, sheriff. I wouldn't be surprised none if I wasn't able to get to Orchid City till about ten days from last Monday."

"You got a kiddin' streak in you when it comes to fixin' time, ain't you?" the sheriff asked. "Well, ten days from last Monday will be six days from to-day. No use waitin' that long. "I'll be hearin' from your sheriff to-night or in the mornin'. I'm goin' to wire, man."

"Yeh, and just as like as not that sheriff will be sixty or a hundred miles from the telegraph office," Sam said. "He is a most lively cuss. On the go all the time."

"You got some game you want to play here," the sheriff said suspiciously.

"Ain't it natural that I should want to see if I can't locate the boy that throwed the dope into my cup?" Sam asked.

"Well, that's natural," the sheriff agreed. "Here's your star. I ain't so strong on stars myself. You can pin it under your coat or on your undershirt or some place, so's you'll have it for identification. And now, you just remember, son, that I will be quite angry if I get any bad word about you from your sheriff."

"You won't get no bad report about me," Sam assured him. "I am as good as elected to this job unanimous."

"Well, I'll go down and look around for that boy," the sheriff said, rising. "You lay up for a bit an' get your feet under you."

"So I will," said Sam. "S' long."

"'Long," the sheriff said and departed.

Sam got to unsteady feet and locked

the door behind the official. Then he wavered over to his suitcase and got out a belt with two guns holstered to it. He buckled on the belt and pinned his star to his shirt. Then he took a look in the glass.

It was an unshaven, haggard face that stared out at him. There were deep circles beneath the eyes and the eyes themselves were bloodshot.

"I'm a fine lookin' deputy right this minute," he told himself.

There was a knock on the door. Sam slipped off the belt and unpinned the star. He opened the door and the doctor walked in. He looked at Sam in amazement.

"Are you alone and up?" he asked.

"So it seems," Sam said.

"Men must be forged in foundries where you come from," the doctor said. "You ought still to be in bed, half dead."

"Only the good gets poisoned to death young," Sam said. "How about some food an' coffee, doc, some that's guaranteed not to be flavored with dope."

"You can have the coffee and a little broth," the doctor said.

"An' some ham and eggs or beans," Sam added.

"To-morrow. If you'll be good to-night I'll turn you loose in the morning."

Turn him loose in the morning he did. Sam, a little shaky, went down to his former table and ordered an outrageous meal. The romantic waitress voiced a solicitous objection, but Sam insisted.

"I got to build myself up fast, sister," he said. "This here wobbly state I'm in ain't natural to me."

While she went to order the plenteous food, a man came in and sat down opposite Sam, introducing himself as the manager of the hotel.

"We all regret your misadventure, Mr. Rainey," he said. "We trust that you will consider yourself the guest of the hotel as long as you care to remain here. There will, of course, be no charge."

"I don't want to establish no precedent," Sam said. "I can agree to that only if it's a custom you have for all your poisoned guests."

"Oh, now, Mr. Rainey——" the manager expostulated.

"I was jokin', fella," said Sam in his best society manner. "You don't need to feed and shelter me for nothin' just because I had a little accident under your roof."

"I would consider it a pleasure," the manager said. "You can do me a favor, too, by not mentioning the affair to the reporters who come here."

"Gosh, reporters?" Sam gasped. "I reckon not! I don't want to go breakin' into no newspaper."

"You are our guest then," said the manager firmly. "That is settled."

"Well, since you are so decided about it, all right," Sam said. "But it's goin' to cost you somethin'. I can feel the symptoms of a big appetite goin' all through me. I'll eat you out of house and home."

"No danger," said the manager and went away, exulting that he had got off so easily.

The girl came with the food. Sam looked up at her and laughed.

"Me?" he said. "I'm sittin' on the top of the world, ain't I, sister?"

"It's no more than you deserve," she said. "But what's the big idea in the guns and the belt. I got eyes. I can tell when a man is totin' artillery."

"I'm goin' huntin' for that yellow boy," Sam said.

"You'll never find him," she declared.

She was at least the daughter of a prophet. Sam never found the boy. And there was good reason for that. Dorsey had accosted the boy five minutes after Sam had been borne to his room.

"You better beat it, nigger," he said brutally. "That guy has just died."

The boy rolled his wicked eyes. He broke all records for changing from uniform to street clothes and he traveled as far as a fifty dollar bill would carry him, a fifty dollar bill given him by Dorsey.

"An' he done tol' me it was a sleepin' tablet," the boy lamented many times thereafter.

The crime which Dorsey had attempted was a little too hideous even for his submerged soul.

Dorsey only grinned evilly at the recollection. He always tried to pick allies who were easy to frighten. That was why he had picked Styers. However, he had got rid of the yellow boy

but he had not got rid of Styers. And Dorsey was not alone in his knowledge that Styers was weak.

CHAPTER X.

For the next few days Sam became a private in the ranks of the faithful watchers and waiters. Since he had divined the state of his feelings toward the mysterious girl in blue, word from her had become of the utmost importance to him. Her business, whatever it might prove to be, transcended his own business with his enemies.

He spent many hours in the lobby, making sure that none of the men checked out. Much to his satisfaction they stayed on. He wanted to hear from the girl, discover what she sought from him, and then turn his attention, as an officer of the law, to Styers and Styers' companions.

On Monday afternoon, toward dusk, while he sat smoking a cigarette, he saw the manager approaching him. Sam grinned. That manager was almost servile toward Sam and was loud in his praise of Sam's discretion in not letting the poisoning incident get into the newspapers. Sam would as soon have thought of shooting himself between the eyes as of courting notoriety but he did not tell the manager that. He was not averse to holding the manager in the hollow of his brown palm.

The manager now approached him with an air of secrecy and bent down to him.

"Some one is calling you on the telephone," he said. "Of course you do not need to answer the call if you do not wish to. I told all the boys that if there was a call for you they should let me know and not announce your name."

"I'll answer it," said Sam. "You betcha!"

"I'll wait here to make sure nothing untoward happens in your absence," the manager promised.

Sam went toward the phone booth with a grin on his lips. For sure he didn't know what certain boys back home would say if they knew he was being nursed along in this fashion.

In the booth he took up the receiver and said, "Hello." He was disappointed when a man's voice inquired "if this was Mr. Rainey." But he was reassured when he was told to wait a minute, after he had acknowledged his identity; and then the only feminine voice in the world came to him over the wire.

"The week is up," the girl said. "I must see you at once."

"Yes, ma'am," said Sam. "Where?"

"You know where the station is—where we first met. Come there. Then cross the tracks and turn to your right up the first road. When you come to the next road turn into that toward your left. Five houses from the first road you will see a frame cottage, newly painted white. Come up the walk and the door will be promptly opened for you. Step inside without question. When can you come?"

"Shall I wait till it's fully dark?" Sam asked.

"Oh, yes. Can I depend upon you to come?"

"You sure can. I'll be there in the course of the next hour."

He hung up the receiver and went back into the lobby. He nodded to the manager and the manager trotted off, certain that he had taken good care of the guest whose debtor he was.

Sam resumed his seat. Now that the climax of his adventure with the girl seemed to be near, he was more puzzled than ever. For days he had carried the puzzle in the back of his head, but now it was forced to the front. Being young and inexperienced in intricate things, he naturally had some disquieting thoughts. He could not doubt the girl, but it occurred to him that possibly she was caught in a net from which she could not escape and was being forced to drag him into it against her will. She had had five hundred dollars to hand over to him and yet she had been working in the box office of a moving picture theater, probably for small wages. Those two things didn't jibe very well. It was just possible that a jealous lover was back of her somewhere. If Sam had not known differently, he might have suspected a lover of firing on him on the occasion of his former meeting with her.

He was loath to go to meet her armed and yet since he had been fired upon he could scarcely be expected to go unarmed. Sam had learned a great many things in the past week; he was not

nearly so trustful as he had been when he had left the open country where he had spent his life. He had discovered that he could not go blundering along. Gosh, a man had to keep his eyes open and look out for himself in cities.

He had had his supper and he had nothing to do but wait. He had not been without his belt and guns since he had been poisoned, so that he was armed for his adventure. The girl could not have summoned him at a more opportune time. He was as he said, all set.

When the street lights came out with the slipping down of the soft, summer night, he rose lazily and stretched himself. That afternoon he had seen Styers, DeLana and Dorsey in the lobby, but they had not been there since. He was glad that they were absent now, because he did not want them to see him go forth. He wanted to make sure that they would not slip away in his own absence, however, and so he sought out the manager. That old boy might as well serve him a little since he seemed so eager to do so.

"I just want you to give me a little information without askin' no questions," he told the manager in the latter's office. "You know you have three gents here by the name of Styers, DeLana and Dorsey. Can you tell me how long they expect to remain?"

"Oh, yes," said the manager affably, " Mr. Styers is a traveling man and Mr. Dorsey and Mr. DeLana are interested in oil. I understand they have begun an operation over at Orchid City. At least so Mr. Dorsey told me. They spend some of their time over there. Why, they won't be giving up their rooms for a week at least. They take their rooms by the week. We make a slightly better rate, you know. They concluded a week to-day and paid their bills. That would indicate that they will be here for another week at least."

"Uh huh," said Sam. "Y' know I'm a man of close mouth, don't you, mister?"

"I do indeed."

"And I ain't settin' you no bad example in that?" Sam grinned.

"I see," the manager smiled. "Of course I shall not mention to those gentlemen that you have inquired about them. There will be no necessity for it."

"Which is just what I was drivin' at," Sam said. "Thanks!"

He went out into the street and walked rapidly to the cross street which led to the station. Frequent glances to right and left and backward assured him, so far as that was possible in the evening crowd, that he was not being followed. He gained the station without having been shadowed, he believed. Crossing the tracks, he stood for a space at the head of the street of which the girl had spoken. The appearance of the street gave him pause. It ran along in front of a row of warehouses and it was narrow. No lights relieved the darkness which the buildings cast down. If he was to be the victim of a trap, no better locality could have been selected.

It occurred to him that he could easily go on to the next street and reach the white cottage by that way, but he felt that he wanted to follow the girl's instructions to the letter. It would seem like disloyalty to her if he did not do so. He plunged into the darkness.

The darkness favored him in one way. He was able to open his coat and rest his hands on the butts of his guns without that action being observed even if there should be any one to observe. He gained the next corner without having encountered any one. He turned the corner briskly, stopped and came back. He had been followed before and had not seen his man; a bit of reconnoitering would do no harm on this occasion.

His precaution was rewarded. As he stood in the shadow of the corner building, he saw two shadowy forms slip across the railroad track. The gloom along the street took them.

"Well, well," thought Sam, "could it be you, Mr. Dorsey and Mr. DeLana?"

He turned swiftly and ran along the street. He passed the white cottage and noticed that the blinds were all drawn. In a moment he was at the next street corner. Along the intersecting street there was a row of tidy cottages. Signs of life were evident in all of these and Sam did not dare to run past them. He remembered the sheriff's remarks about "skulduggery." It was not beyond the probable that some householder would take a shot at a fleeing man. The populace was considerably aroused by the frequency of the crimes which the sheriff had referred to.

A swift walk brought him to the head of an alley as he had hoped. The alley was a tunnel of black, unrelieved by any light. Sam stepped into the alley. He had to proceed cautiously now, for it was within the possibilities that if the two men had been DeLana and Dorsey they would come up the alley to intercept him on the other street, since they did not know where he was going. At least they did not know where he was going if the girl was playing fair with him. If she was in league with them—but he shut the door of his mind on that thought. It'd be too tough for him if that girl wasn't on the level; he didn't know that much would matter if she was not on the level.

After he had traversed what he judged to be half the length of the alley, he dismissed the notion that the two men were coming up it. They would have had more than time enough to gain the street by now. So Sam sped forward. In a moment there was a little lightening of the gloom ahead of him. He knew he was near the head of the alley. He took half a dozen steps and then he saw what he was looking for. Two men were crouching in the alley's mouth. There was the faint shine of metal in down-dropped hands.

Sam stood as if he had been frozen to the spot. For a moment he forgot his own peril in an overwhelming thought that came to him. These men expected him to return this way. Then did they know just where he was going? If they did, they had got their information from the girl. Anger surged up through the man from the border. The anger was directed toward the two crouching men; it did not include the girl. For the sake of his own peace he had to tell himself that if she had betrayed him, if all along she had been luring him on, she had done so because she was somehow at the mercy of these foul wretches.

Slowly Sam Rainey drew his two guns. How easy it would be to send bullets crashing into those two crouching figures. That would rid him of the trouble they were causing him and it might free the girl. But he couldn't do it. He had always given every man a chance, and besides, pinned to his shirt was the star the sheriff had given him, the emblem of the law he was sworn to uphold. Shooting these men like this would be plain murder, no less.

He advanced a foot, lifted the other foot carefully and brought it up behind the first. So step by step he advanced to the two men. He was within three feet of them before they became aware of his presence. Then they wheeled simultaneously and disclosed themselves, as Sam had expected them to do, as Dorsey and DeLana. Trained in the quick use of firearms, they knew when the odds were against them. They made no move to bring up the guns which they still held at their sides. They had been too startled in the few seconds they had had to bring up the guns, and now they were helpless, for Sam's own leveled guns menaced them. They could just make out the steady barrels and the equally steady brown hands which held the butts. They stared at the hands and then their eyes came up to the impassive face which they could also just make out. Cold the face was and emotionless as a mask. Only the eyes gleamed brightly with a deadly purpose. Here was a man who would shoot if ever these two had confronted such a man. He might intend to shoot even if they made no hostile move. He did not bluster; he did not threaten. He was like a still, voiceless avenger, unexpectedly come with a single purpse—to slay.

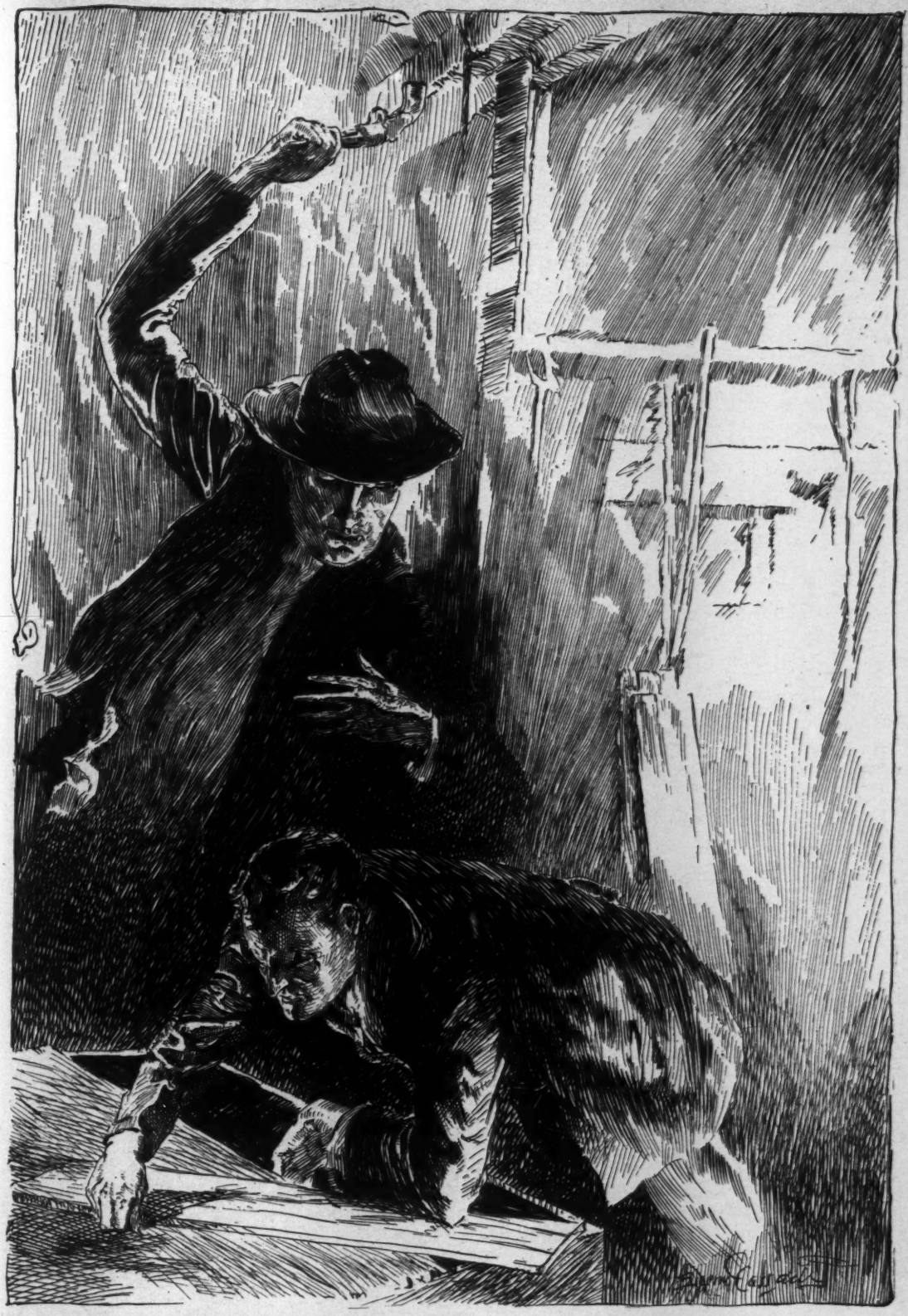
"Whatcha holdin' us up for, fella?" Dorsey breathed.

"We ain't done nothin' to you tonight," DeLana added.

Still Sam said nothing. He was considering what he should do. The time for a coup had come. He had to leave an impression with these two gents, but he could not waste much time in creating an impression. No matter whether she was mixed up in this affair or not, he had to keep his appointment with the lady and already he was late for that.

For a space he stood with knitted brow. Then the frown vanished. His mouth twitched at the corners. His teeth showed in a grin. DeLana snatched at hope, thinking he saw a sign of relenting.

"That's right, fella," he said. "It ain't anything you are concerned in. We weren't laying for you. We didn't know you were down this way."



He tried to get to his feet but had not sufficient strength. The gun crashed down on the back of his head.

"Sure you didn't," Sam agreed heartily. "You are just huntin' rabbits in these trees that are growin' all around us. Well, it don't make no difference. I wasn't findin' no mirth in what had happened. I was thinkin' of what is goin' to happen. Honest, boys, I got the grandest idea that ever popped into the mind of man."

Dorsey was quickly suspicious of this levity. It didn't look good to him. He had Sam pegged for a fool but he, for one, could never tell what a fool would do. Some wild plan, which would not prove to be a pretty plan for himself and DeLana, had undoubtedly popped into the head of this particular fool. Dorsey's hand tightened on his gun. Sam saw the little, convulsive movement.

"Yeh," he said, and his grin faded, "bring your gun right up, Dorsey. I'll give you all the chance in the world. Bring it up—or drop it. You both got about five seconds to make up your minds which you'll do."

Dorsey and DeLana dropped their guns. Sam returned one of his own weapons to a holster. He transferred the remaining gun to his left hand. Then he spread his feet a little, planted them firmly on the beaten earth of the alley, and launched a sudden blow at the side of Dorsey's jaw. The blow landed just as Sam had intended it to land. Dorsey went straight down to his knees and then plunged along on his face.

DeLana, scared into inaction for a moment, stood staring down at his accomplice. For a few further seconds his eyes fleeted to Sam's face and hung there. What he saw in that face was sufficient. He started to turn for flight. Sam seized him and flung him back. As he reeled past Sam, the latter struck him as he had struck Dorsey. DeLana went down and lay with his face upturned to the night sky. Sam picked up the two guns the men had dropped and put them in their pockets. He sped across to the station and found a telephone booth. Central connected him with police headquarters.

"Two hold-up men are in an alley right across from the station," he told whoever answered. "You better get some cops down here and see what it's all about."

The click of a circuit suddenly closed was his answer but it was sufficient, he believed. Leaving the station, he went to the corner at which he had stood while watching DeLana and Dorsey cross to the alley. In a surprisingly short time a car wheeled into the dark street, the headlights flooding along it. The car stopped at the alley. Three men piled out. They ran into the alley. A moment more and they emerged, carrying a burden—either DeLana or Dorsey, Sam was sure. A second similar trip was made. The car was turned about and went back by the way it had come.

When it was out of sight, Sam walked along the street till he came to the white cottage. He went up the path to the front door. The door was promptly opened. Removing his hat, Sam stepped through the door. It was closed behind him.

With her hand on the knob, Miss Katherine Hale confronted him.

CHAPTER XI.

For a space they stood and looked into each other's eyes. Sam immediately had a reaction from the suspicion which had come to him. Certainly this clear-eyed, appealing girl could not be in league with thugs like the two he had just felled in the alley. He decided to say nothing about his adventure. It would only give her additional cause for worry. Also he decided that he would tell her nothing about the attempt to poison him. She would be humiliated by knowing that she had been impersonated by such a woman as that woman on the telephone must have been.

On her part the girl seemed to be satisfied with her scrutiny of Sam. After she had searched his face she smiled a little and Sam was glad to return that smile. He felt as if he had lifted a burden from the girl's heart.

"Well, here I am, ma'am, accordin' to schedule," he said.

"Come in and sit down," she said and she led the way into a room off the hall.

It was a plainly furnished room. It gave no evidence of prosperity. It was a small room but even so it looked as if every dollar spent upon it had done full

duty. Sam couldn't understand how a girl with five hundred dollars to stake on an adventure with a strange man would be living in these surroundings.

"I am at your service, ma'am," he said, as they sat down. "I reckon I don't need to tell you that I have been more or less puzzled by what has passed between you and me."

"I knew you would be," she said in a low voice, "and I am grateful to you for your patience. Not many men would have played your part as you have played it. Now, before I tell you how you can serve me, I will answer any questions you wish to ask."

"You might tell me your name," Sam suggested.

"Katherine Hale," she said.

"How does it come that you live in a little house like this and work at a picture show and still you have five hundred dollars to hand to me?"

"The five hundred dollars was all the money I had in the world," she answered. "I gave it to you so that I would be sure that you would have money enough to remain at the hotel till I called you."

"How did you come to pick me?"

"I had been looking for some one for a week," she answered. "I have a friend at the hotel. Who she is doesn't matter just now. I told her what my need was and she examined the register and found your name. She described you to me and arranged that I should see you. As soon as I saw you I knew that you were the man I was looking for. I—I took the liberty of wiring the sheriff of your county about you and he wired back that you were dependable and square, as he said."

A smile glimmered along Sam's lips. That sheriff back home would wonder what Sam was up to. Two telegrams were about two more than he usually received about natives traveling away from home, unless the travelers happened to land in jail.

"Well," he said slowly, "you've got my name and credentials and I've got your name. I don't need no credentials from you. Let's hear what it is you want, ma'am. I got to confess to a burnin' curiosity about this matter."

The girl stirred uneasily in her chair under Sam's frank gaze. She was aware that there was admiration in his eyes. That would be an asset for her and yet she was not the kind of girl to trade on the emotion she roused in a man like Sam.

"What I tell you may seem very fantastic," she said. "Please don't interrupt me till I finish."

Sam folded his arms and nodded. His silence now seemed to hold for her a promise that he would be silent till she finished.

"You arrived in town on the night of the fifteenth on the evening train from the southwest," she said. "It was dark when you alighted from the train. You were importuned by taxi drivers and by the men from the uptown hotels. You didn't listen to any of them. Instead you edged your way through the crowd and went out to the street that leads to town. You saw that the hotels probably lay in the direction of the lights. You had never been in a city of this size before and you had a notion that you would look for lodgings in a quieter part of town. You turned away from the lights.

"You walked for several blocks, past houses, but on none of them did you see a sign which offered shelter for the night. You decided that you would have to go downtown. You had been riding for long hours and you were hungry and sleepy. On a last chance you turned into a cross street four or five blocks from here. Then you turned into this street and came past this house. That brought you to the dark street down which you have just come. You walked along it toward the street on which you first stood when you went along the station platform.

"Presently you came to an alley. Just as you reached it you saw two shadowy figures dodge into the alley. You had read that a good many crimes had been committed and you believed it was your duty to see what these two were going to do. You stood at the head of the alley and saw the men enter a building halfway to the next street. A light was shining into the alley from that building. You feared that a robbery was about to be committed. You looked about for a policeman, but saw none. After a space of hesitation, for you did not know just what to do in an emergency like this, you did the simplest,

bravest thing and ran up the alley to the building. Just before you reached the window through which the light was shining, you saw two men run out. Your guns were in your suitcase and you could not halt the two men. They ran along the alley in the other direction. You followed them but they halted you by firing at you. You had to let them go and you returned to the building."

She paused to take a long, deep breath, for the words had been rushing from her lips. Interruption from Sam was not within the possibilities. Amazement gripped him. He wondered, with pity in his heart, whether this girl had not borne so much, somehow, that her mind had given way. She had thought he would find her tale fantastic. Fantastic! It was the wildest story he had ever listened to. He sat with arms still folded and stared at her.

"Inside the building you found an open safe and a dazed young man staring at it," the girl went on. "You asked him what had happened and he just stood looking at you. He acted as if he had been roused from sleep. After a while you put your question again. He pointed to the safe then and said a robbery had been committed. He had been working on the books and had had no supped. Fifteen minutes before he had gone to a restaurant and had got two cups of coffee and two sandwiches. When he had returned to the office he had felt sleepy. He remembered leaving his stool and walking over to a chair. He must have fallen asleep in the chair, for he came to a shadowy wakefulness after a while. It was like a dream to him. But, as through a mist, he saw two men enter the office, go to the open safe, and take all the money there was in it. He tried to rise to stop them as they left and after they were gone he tried to cry out. But he seemed to be paralyzed and unable either to move or to utter a word. Then he was in front of the safe and you were there. He said there had been about twelve thousand dollars in the safe. The money was to be used to pay the help in a factory the next morning. You and he searched the safe and you found the money all gone. You suggested that he telephone to the police. He tried to but the wires were cut.

"He was weak and sick and you took him to the station and got him into a cab and took him to his boarding house. From there he telephoned to the police. You told him you would go uptown and get a room at a hotel and would be there when he wanted you. He gave you the name of a hotel. You have been there ever since and—and—you—you——"

She stopped again. Her voice had been growing lower and lower till at the last it trailed off soundlessly. She kept her eyes on Sam's and in them there was a great plea, a deep yearning that he would not deny her story. Sam dropped his hands and hooked them into his belt. Of course this was some sort of game, but on her part it was a very earnest game. Gosh, she had told that story as if she believed it.

"That was how it was, wasn't it?" she asked softly.

"Ma'am," Sam said, "I am whirlin' round considerable. You just give me a minute or two and mebbe I will light some place. If anybody in the complete world but you had told me this story, of course I would just laugh, but I can't laugh at what you tell me. Still and all it is sort of fantastic as you said it would be. There ain't no truth in it, you know."

"It is only half a lie," she said. "You know you did turn away from town when you left the station."

"I told you that," Sam said, "but about this here robbery——"

"The story of the robbery is true," she said.

"Except," said Sam, "that I wasn't there."

"But you must have been there," she declared. "I'm depending upon you to have been there."

Sam studied her face anew. He had never seen a face so full of eager longing. The girl's expression seemed to say that all she hoped for depended upon his agreeing to accept her story as fact. And he knew, since he loved her and had a conception of the kind of girl she was, that her longing was not for herself alone. For whom, then?

Sam Rainey was not very wise in the ways of the world. Of complexities he knew little. Simple his own life had been and simple and clean he had kept it. He was naturally loyal, steadfast,

unwavering, and because of those qualities he did not need to be sophisticated to find reason in the girl's appeal. He knew that she was seeking aid not for herself but for some one else, some one doubtless very dear to her.

That knowledge swept through Sam like a cold wind which struck at his marrow. He could vision the dazed boy standing before the safe. Somehow the robbery of the safe had imperiled that youngster. The girl had flown to his aid. Unable to help him through fact, she had woven her wild tale. She had placed that tale before Sam as the truth and was entreating him now to accept it as the truth. She was not merely asking him to act a part; she was asking him to deceive even himself so that the tale would become truth by the earnest deception which she thought he would be capable of for her sake and in a cause which she believed to be honest.

And of course she loved this boy who to Sam was a mere shadow in the picture. She loved him so devotedly that she was willing to lie for him, and she was beseeching Sam to lie for him. Also she must have seen in Sam's unveiled eyes how he felt toward her. Sitting here before her, he had not tried to conceal his feelings from her. She knew—and yet she was willing to use him as she had suggested.

"That boy," Sam said hoarsely, "he didn't take the money? You're not trying to cover him up with a cloak of lies?"

"No, no," she cried, "I am not. If he were guilty, I would let the law take its course. But he is not guilty. You'll have to take my word for it that he is not, Mr. Rainey."

"I didn't suppose the time would ever come when I would hesitate to take your word," he said.

"You don't think I'm capable of lying, do you?" she asked leaning to him.

"Ain't it a lie you are asking me to join you in?" he asked.

"Yes, but to save this boy from prison," she explained. "He has been arrested and accused of the robbery. He is in jail now, unable to make bond. They fixed his bond at five thousand dollars in spite of all our protests that it was too high. The magistrate said there had been too many crimes lately. He said he was going to make an example of Tom. We can get a hundred character witnesses when he has his trial a week from to-day. If you tell your story, I am sure he will go free. You can describe those men. Whatever you say will have an air of conviction. No one could look at you and believe you a liar."

"And after the trial when the boy was free, I would have just one thing left to me," Sam said. "I would know that I was a liar. I wouldn't be able to look an honest man in the face. I would be a wanderer over the face of the earth. I would be destroyin' myself, ma'am. Would it be right for me to destroy myself for the sake of a boy I've never even seen? It's a question of his bein' destroyed or me bein' destroyed."

"I—I wouldn't let you be destroyed," she said. "I—I would be your friend forever. Wouldn't that be something?"

A feeling that was kin to despair flooded through Sam. He could see what she meant. She cared so much for this boy that she would reward his rescuer. What kind of a man was this Tom, then? Why, he wasn't worth saving. If he would permit himself to be saved at her expense, he was a coward—and maybe he was a thief. The girl hadn't been present at the robbery. She had only his story about what had happened. Sam's anger flamed against the boy. And he himself would not have the girl for his wife on those terms. If he did this thing, he would not only free the boy but he would free her.

"What do you expect me to do with this story?" he asked. "Go to the officers with it?"

"No, no. Of course not. That would be fatal. They would want to know why you had not come to them before. You will not even hint at it till you take the witness stand."

"You expect me to go on the witness stand and perjure myself?" he demanded.

She winced at the word, but even its ugliness could not turn her away from her purpose. She nodded slowly and tears brimmed her lovely eyes. Sam sprang up and paced the floor. Was

ever a man caught in a net like this? There she was offering her plea with tears in her eyes. She was ready to break him on the wheel to save her lover. Love had blinded her to everything, to honesty, to justice. And yet he was sure if he rejected her plea he would break her heart, break the heart of the first girl he had ever cared for.

Suddenly he thought of the oath he had taken. He was an armed man because of that oath. The law had given him weapons wherewith to defend society. It had given him the badge of authority. His star seemed to burn his breast.

"You can see how it will be," her voice came to him as from a distance. "The prosecution can only accuse Tom of the robbery. They will have no eye-witnesses."

"Unless somebody lies for them," Sam said bitterly.

"Don't try to hurt me," she said. "I realize fully the enormity of the thing I am asking you to do. They will have no eye-witnesses. They will have only the circumstances. We will bring witness after witness to testify to the kind of boy Tom has been. Then you will take the stand. You will swear that you saw just what I have told you you saw. Don't you see that they will be unable to go back of your testimony? We can show that you are not an interested witness. You did not know Tom or any of his friends even. We will show the reputation you have back home. We can prove that you were never in this city before. Oh, in the atmosphere of that trial your story will come like a great breath of pure air, a sweeping wind to blow the fog of doubt away."

Sam, in his restless pacing, had reached the far end of the room. To his left there were curtains dividing this room from the next. Turning, he looked at these curtains with moody eyes. Then he did not complete the turn. For five seconds he stood with his eyes riveted on those curtains. He came round then and walked to the other end of the room. There was a grim, tight smile on his lips. Once more he was opposite the curtains.

"You are quite sure, lady," he said over his shoulder, " that you want me to perjure myself. You want me to go into that court-room and lie like a horse thief?"

"That is a terrible way to put it."

"I don't guess the truth is any more terrible than the lie you want me to tell," he retorted.

While he spoke he turned so that he faced the curtains. Suddenly his body stiffened, then relaxed. He sprang forward and his long arms were wrapped about a figure beyond the curtains, the curtains themselves being wrapped about that figure. There was a brief, futile struggle. Sam reached up and pulled the curtains from their hangings. The curtains dropped to the floor and the face of a youth of twenty-four or thereabouts was revealed. He was fair-haired, with a smooth handsome face, which was now quiet pale. His widened eyes gazed up at Sam. Sam held him in an iron grip for a moment. Then he took him by the shoulders, lifted him from the entanglement of the curtain and pushed him violently away from him. The youth brought up against the further wall of the little room on his hands and knees. His head had come into contact with the wall and for an instant he seemed to be stunned. Nevertheless he got to his feet and leaned against the wall, facing Sam. There was a look of grim resolution in his face, a look which was in odd contrast to his youth, a youth emphasized by his fairness.

The girl rose to her feet and stood wavering. She was as uncertain of herself from mental shock as the boy was from physical shock. Over against the open doorway Sam Rainey towered, the strong dominating figure in the group. His hands were clenched at his sides. His eyes flashed. Anger seemed to be flooding through him but no quiver of it was apparent in his big body. Slowly he turned toward the girl accusingly.

"A friend of yours?" he asked. "A spy, huh?"

CHAPTER XII.

The youth straightened up still more and shot an angry glance at Sam. The girl moved over to the youth and stood beside him.

"Spy, huh?" the young man repeated. "You use pretty strong words, don't you? I'd like to know what you are doing here, anyhow."

"Hush, Tom," the girl said, laying her hand on his arm. "Let me explain."

"Let him explain," Tom said roughly. "What is his talk about your wanting him to tell a lie? He's lying himself when he insinuates such a thing. Who is he anyhow?"

"How much did you hear?" Katherine asked.

"Just what he said at the last."

Katherine breathed out a sigh of relief and she sent an appealing glance at Sam. Sam nodded. He thought he understood the situation. These two were sweethearts. The boy was merely suffering from jealousy. And the girl had been trying to use Sam to free the boy from the charge against him.

Sam Rainey's struggle with himself was brief. He saw, or thought he saw, that he had been a fool even to dream that Katherine would ever care for him. He had a notion that he was rather ridiculous in this little drama. Tom was a good looker, no question about it. He had class. He was the kind of fellow Katherine would pick. He was like herself. They both had the clean, proud distinction of youth. Sam was nearly thirty, an old man compared to these two. And he was uncouth. What a silly figure he must have cut at the hotel among the other guests. What'd he ever left the cattle country for? That was where he belonged and that was certainly where a girl like Katherine did not belong. She would want the security that cities usually offer. It was only a freakish chance that had caught her up in her present situation.

As Sam stood looking at them, the girl's hand still lying on the boy's arm and her eyes going from his face to Sam's, Sam thought of his gun belt and his two guns and the star on his breast. He was the law here and the law had been working an injustice against these two.

Slowly Sam unbuckled the belt and laid it with the guns on the table, the while the others watched him with fascinated eyes. Then he reached beneath his coat, unpinned his star and laid that beside the guns.

"I been a deputy sheriff for a little while," he said, "and a little while is long enough, I reckon. I'm putting aside my authority. Ma'am, I listened to your story with the greatest attention. You can depend upon me from now on."

Katherine stared at the belt and the badge and her eyes went from those to Sam's face again.

"Were you a deputy when I first appealed to you?" she asked.

"No, that come later but forget it, lady. Everything will be as you want it. I understood from you that this lad was in jail. How did you get out, son?"

"We had a rough time at the jail this afternoon," Tom answered. "There are some tough fellows in that jail, I'm telling you. The jailer came in with a prisoner just before noon and when he unlocked the door to the corridor three of the prisoners jumped him and tried to make a break for liberty. The sheriff and a deputy stopped them at the foot of the stairs. Toward seven o'clock two prisoners were brought in. The jailer pushed them into the outer hall, unlocked the inner door, and told some of the other prisoners to come and get them while he waited outside. I was standing near the unlocked inner door. While the other prisoners took the two inside they were between me and the jailer. I crept past them and hid in the dark at the end of the corridor. I reckon lawbreakers must stick together. The jailer told the prisoners to take the two men to the far end of the corridor. They did it and the jailer came into the outer corridor and locked that inner door. He was about to leave when some one called to him that a man in a cell in the tier opposite to where I was hiding wanted him. He went around there, leaving the outer door unlocked, because the prisoners, he supposed, were safe behind the inner door. While he was gone, I slipped out the door and down the stairs. Luckily I was fully dressed and the sheriff was at supper. There were a couple of men in the office but I reckon they thought I was a visitor. I went out on the steps slowly and stood there a few seconds while I lighted a cigarette. Then I walked away from the jail. When I felt that I was unobserved, I hurried here by the back way and here I am."

"And just what do you expect to do?" Sam asked.

"I'm going to get out of the country," Tom answered, and his face hardened. "I don't want to run away, but what am I going to do? I have no witnesses to an incredible story. After I woke up I tried to telephone to the police but the wires were cut. Somehow I got to my boarding house. From there I telephoned to the police station. Officers came after me. They searched me and in the inside pocket of my coat they found a sheaf of banknotes. They accused me of having lost my nerve. They said my story of being drugged was bunk. They believed I had intended flight from my boarding house but had lost my nerve and phoned to them, thinking to delude them into believing the story. They tried to get me to confess I was in league with the robbers. I wasn't and I wouldn't confess. If I stay here they'll find me and arrest me again."

"Where did the sheaf of banknotes come from?" Sam asked.

"I don't know. I couldn't remember. I suppose, though, that the robbers dropped it in their hasty flight."

"The safe was open when the robbers got there?"

"Yes. I left it open when I took the books out. I had a gun right under the desk. I didn't expect there would be a robbery."

"Your leavin' the safe open looks bad," Sam said.

"That's a point the chief seized on. He tried to get me to say I had left the safe open so that the robbers could get to it. He said that it was queer they should show up on the very night I was working in the office. I hadn't done any work at night for two months."

"Did you tell the police that you went from the office to your boarding house alone?" Sam asked eagerly.

"I didn't tell them anything," Tom answered. "They were too cussed mean for any good use. They tried to bully me and after I had said I was drugged I shut up like a clam. Let them find out what they can from now on. They'll get nothing from me."

Sam had hoped that Tom had told his story in detail. If he had Sam would be let out. Any story he could tell would conflict with Tom's and would not be believed. But as it was the matter was wide open.

Sam stood plunged in thought for a few minutes. Several things, as illuminating as a long-held flash of lightning, were passing through his brain.

"How much money was in the package you held in your hand?" he asked.

"Five hundred dollars. It was bound with a paper band."

"All the money was bound like that?"

"Most of it, especially the big bills."

"Where is the place where you ate?"

"Just over beyond the station. It's a little hole-in-the-wall, run by a Greek."

"Who waited on you?"

"A Greek, not the proprietor, I think."

"Was any one else in the restaurant?"

"Not when I went in. While the Greek was making my sandwiches a man came in and talked to the Greek a few minutes and then went out."

"Did you get a good look at him?"

"I didn't pay any attention."

"Have you ever eaten in that restaurant before?"

"No, I always go to my boarding house for my meals. I've been trying to save a little money and I've lived close."

Sam stood in silence again for a space. He wasn't much of a prober, he felt. Digging out information was tough work. He tried, in his silence, to visualize the scene in the restaurant. The stranger who had spoken to the Greek interested him. He pictured the two men standing there, plotting together. Or perhaps they had not been plotting.

"Did the two men seem to be talking over anything sort of secret?" he asked.

"No, I thought about that afterwards. They seemed to be carrying on an ordinary conversation. I couldn't hear what they said. They were standing at the far end of the counter, while I was near the door."

"Did the man go out before the Greek served your sandwiches?"

"Just as the Greek started to serve them. He drew a cup of coffee and put it on the counter and then he turned round for a plate. I was looking that way then for an instant and I knew that my food would be ready soon. I was hungry."

"Ah," said Sam. "The coffee was in front of the visitor and the sandwiches were made. Then the Greek turned for the plate."

"That's it."

"Did you watch him till he turned back with the plate?"

"No, I didn't. I just glanced down there to see if the food was nearly ready."

"Then for a little while neither you nor the Greek was looking at the stranger?"

"That's correct."

"All right!" Sam said. "That's all you can tell me, I reckon."

He had drawn himself up and there was a cool smile on his lips. As an investigator he wasn't so bad after all. He thought he had a few leads at least.

"Now what had you and Miss Hale been talking about before I came?" Frank asked.

Sam opened his lips to speak; Tom raised a hand.

"Just a minute," he said. "Miss Hale has been standing through all this and she must be tired. Take this seat, Katherine."

He took the girl by the arm and led her around the table and so brought her to a chair. She sank into it. Tom then came up to the side of the table nearest to Sam. Sam did not pay attention to the movement. He did not notice that Tom was now within reach of the two guns. He was wondering what Katherine must think of him. He had allowed her to stand and had given no thought to the fact that she must be tired. That was an additional reason why she would choose a man like Tom. In ordinary circumstances she would not look twice at a roughneck like himself. She would want a polished man who had the graces that Tom had.

"Now," said Tom giving Sam the chance to say what he had intended to say when Tom interrupted.

Sam glanced past the youth to the girl. She shook her head, her lips compressed.

Tom turned and looked at her. His color ran up into his cheeks.

"What are you hushing him up for, Katherine?" he asked. "What's the secret between you two? What was he saying about lies?"

The girl twisted her hands in her lap helplessly. Sam took a step toward Tom. She might love Tom but that gave him no license to "get mad" at her.

"If Miss Hale doesn't want to tell you, she needn't," Sam said. "If you are going to light out, you had better do it."

"I'll go in good time," Tom answered. "I don't think there is any hurry. They won't miss me till breakfast time at the jail."

"You had better be makin' your plans at any rate," Sam suggested.

Tom's hands had been on the table behind him. Now his right hand whipped out and there was one of Sam's guns in it. He leveled the gun at Sam.

"I don't know what the game is here," Tom grated. "I don't know what you and Katherine have been framing up. But I do know that you are a deputy, mister, and all deputies look alike to me. I'm holding you up till you make a few promises to me."

"As to what."

"First that you won't turn me in."

Sam folded his arms and leaned back against the wall. He was highly amused. He didn't suppose Tom had used a gun half a dozen times in his life. He wondered what Tom took him for. Didn't the youngster know that an old head like himself could tell when a man was going to shoot. Sam knew that he was in no danger from the pointed gun unless Tom should discharge it accidentally because of nervousness or haste. And there didn't seem to be much danger of that. He seemed fairly cool.

"I'm making no promises," Sam said.

"You'd better!"

Sam took a forward step in the face of the gun.

"Keep back!" Tom gritted.

Sam lifted his foot for another step. He did not take the step. Katherine sprang to her feet and ran in front of Tom. Her body was interposed between the gun and Sam.

"Put that gun down, Tom," she ordered. "This man is the best friend you have right now."

"He's a deputy," Tom said stubbornly.

Sam came up behind the girl. He put his hands on her shoulders and gently moved her to one side.

"He ain't goin' to shoot, ma'am," he said.

He reached out his hand and plucked the gun from Tom's.

"Stand aside, youngster, while I get my stuff," he ordered.

Tom stood aside. His eyes were fixed on Sam's hand. He was fascinated by the loose way in which Sam handled a gun. He saw now the folly of his trying to bluff this man.

Sam took up the belt and buckled it around his waist. He restored the gun to its holster and then he pinned his star on his breast under his coat.

"You're a deputy again?" the girl asked fearfully.

"I'm a deputy again and will be for a little while," Sam answered.

"You are not going to do what I asked you to do?"

"Not for the present, ma'am. I have put that idea away from me for the time bein'. I ain't sayin' I won't drag it out again if I have to."

"You are not goin' to desert us?"

"I never deserted nobody yet," Sam declared. "I——"

He did not finish. There was a loud rapping on the front door.

"Somebody's come for me," Tom whispered fearfully.

"Mebbe," Sam said coolly, "but they ain't goin' to get you. You get into the back of the house and hide out till they go away."

"They'll search the house."

"They won't go beyond them curtains," Sam promised, "not while I'm here."

The boy stepped toward the curtains. Katherine ran after him.

"Promise me you won't run away," she breathed.

Tom stood looking down at her. Then his gaze went to the big man, standing with his eyes on the door.

"Well, I'll promise," Tom said, and disappeared through the curtains.

As he went the knocking on the door was resumed, louder and longer this time. Sam stepped back.

"You open the door, ma'am, and let them in," he said. Don't be afraid. They won't hurt you."

Katherine went into the hall and opened the door. Without a word two men in citizens' clothes entered the hall and pressed past her into the room where Sam stood with his back to the curtains.

"'Evenin', gents," Sam said cheerfully. "What can we do for you?"

The two men eyed the big figure speculatively. Sam's coat was unbuttoned and they could not fail to see his belt and the bulge of his guns. Also they noticed that he stood with his hands on his hips. He was smiling but it was not the smile of mirth. The smile and the lidded eyes gave the face a grim look.

"We're looking for a man named Rainey," one of the men said.

"That's me. What of it?"

"We've been ordered to arrest you," the man said.

"You're officers?"

"Yeh."

Sam eyed them closely. His hands left his hips and the curled fingers were above the guns.

"I reckon, gents," he said icily, "you will have to come and get me."

CHAPTER XIII.

"You are charged with carrying concealed weapons and assault and battery," the spokesman said.

"Who makes all them funny little charges?" Sam asked.

"I can't tell you. The chief merely said to come and get you."

"How did you know I would be here?"

"Can't tell you that either. We just got our orders."

Sam thought quickly as he stared across the room at the two men. The matter of their knowledge that he was here in this house was suddenly much more important than the matter of his arrest. He wasn't going to be arrested, not by a jugful. No narrow confines of a cell for him. Why, he wouldn't be able to breathe in a cell. And he wouldn't be able to serve Katherine and the boy. It was an exceedingly silly errand these men had come upon.

Out of the swirl of his thoughts an idea came to the surface, like the bobbing up of some object on the bosom of a real stream. Certainly the police would not have known that he was in this house. Complaint had doubtless been lodged against him by Dorsey and DeLana after they had been taken to the station. Then those two must know that the girl lived here and they must also

know that she and Sam were acquainted. That fitted in very nicely with several other hunches Sam had. He had seemed to come to a confluence in the affairs of Katherine Hale, Dorsey, DeLana, Styers, and himself. That was good. It was very good. And of course it was a further argument against his yielding himself up to the two officers.

While these thoughts flitted through his mind the two men stood across from him eying him speculatively. They respected the strength of fine young bodies and they admired Sam briefly. But they had to do their duty. The hand of the spokesman lifted toward his hip. It moved toward the hip pocket. It was at the hip pocket. But it did not withdraw a gun. Sam's own right hand darted to his holster, darted up. There was a gun in it. The other man dropped his hand.

"Fast, ain't you?" he said angrily.

"That wasn't fast," Sam said amiably. "You could see me do it, couldn't you? A draw needs to be just fast enough to beat the other fellow's draw. That's how I timed myself."

"You're only adding one more charge to those already made," the man informed him. "You're resisting an officer."

"Can't help it," Sam said. "You fellows might as well clear out. I'm not going with you."

"We'll get you sooner or later."

Sam considered the situation. He did not know how long the men would wait. Maybe they would wait for hours. In that event the chief of police would send some one to look for them. The chief must know where they were. The house might be surrounded and a gun battle ensue. Katherine would thus be endangered. He turned to her.

"Is this your house, ma'am?" he asked.

"Oh, no, I just board here. I don't live in the city. I only came on here when——"

Sam stopped her with a vigorous shake of his head. He understood perfectly why she had come on. She had come to aid her sweetheart when he was placed under arrest. This knowledge burned into Sam's heart and brain. Every minute since he had been in this room he had found himself caring more and more for Katherine. And she was devoted to Tom. Sam turned angrily on the two officers.

"Well," he grated, "it seems to be your move. What're you going to do about it?"

"What are you going to do—kill us and be hunted as a murderer."

"I can shoot a man without killing him," Sam stated. "No, I'm not going to kill you. Miss Hale, is there any place else you can go to. Then I'll be able to leave."

"I don't want to leave here," she said tensely. "I mustn't."

She meant, Sam knew, that she mustn't leave while Tom was in the house.

"Well, you'd better go into the other room," he said. "There may be a little ruckus here and it may not be pretty."

"Well," she said and she passed through the curtains, pulling them together behind her.

Sam had been watching the two men out of the corner of his eye and now he turned to them fully. Grim, determined expressions had come into their faces. Sam knew that they might fight till he would be called upon to shoot. He had no intention of shooting either of the men. They had the law on their side.

The law! It made him think of his badge. In a way he had the law on his side, too, but he decided that he could not use it as a cloak. Charges had been made against him; he was a sort of outlaw already.

Reaching beneath his coat he unpinned his badge and tossed it on the table.

"I'm giving that up to you fellas," he said. "I reckon I ain't got no right to be wearin' it. I'll be a fugitive in the next few minutes and stars ain't for decoratin' fugitives."

The spokesman picked up the badge, looked at it curiously, and then curiously regarded Sam.

"You one of Battles' men?" he asked.

"I sure was. I ain't no more. I just explained why."

"Good gosh," the man broke out, "if you're a deputy we ain't got no call to arrest you. Why didn't you say that in the first place?"

"Dumb, I reckon," Sam grinned.

"O' course I ain't takin' your word

for nothin'," the man said. "You can't blame me for that. I'm goin' to call up the sheriff. I see there's a phone in the hall."

"Go to it," Sam said.

He went into the hall, called a number and apparently got Battles. He called another number and addressed as chief the person whom he at length got on the telephone. His conversation with the chief was brief.

When he finally hung up the receiver, he came to the door, waved his hand, and grinned.

"All right, kid," he said, "but the next time we come after you you show that badge if you still got it. The sheriff says you're one of his men. The chief says all right to that, says he didn't reckon there was much in the charges anyhow. S' long."

His fellow officer followed him out of the front door and Sam was left alone. He took up his badge and fingered it for a moment, eyeing it with a good deal of satisfaction. There was a good deal more in this law stuff than he had thought. Gosh, he wouldn't give up that star for a good deal.

After pinning the star back on his shirt, he went to the curtains and called Katherine's name through them. She came from the rear of the house apparently, for he could hear her approaching footsteps. When she came through the curtains, she looked about the room rather helplessly.

"Why, they're gone," she said.

"Yeh," said Sam, "my little badge has saved me from a cell. I'm goin' to wear it forever more."

He did not at first understand the look of terror that leaped into her eyes. The terror froze her to the spot where she stood for a moment and then she sprang back to the curtains and stood before them, her arms outstretched.

"Tom," she screamed, "Run. Get away. He is going to take you back to jail. I can see it in his eyes. Run, Tom, run!"

Sam could not let the boy get away. Flight for him now would be fatal. Sam supposed that he had never been far from the ease and comfort of cities. He would not know how to flee in the hills and the open places. Grim man-hunters would be on his trail in a few hours. He would be overtaken and if he tried to make a stand he would be shot. Sam knew the emotion which surges in the hearts of men when they take up the chase of a criminal, or a man whom they believe to be a criminal.

No, he could not let the boy escape. He had to stay him. He sprang to Katherine's side and seized her hands. They were very small hands in his big ones, but he could not hold them fast without exerting some pressure; he saw her wince, saw her face whiten. Sweat stood out on his forehead; he could feel it trickle down his spine.

"Oh, don't struggle, lady," he entreated. "Don't make me use force on *you*. See, I'm tryin' to be as gentle as I can. Please come away from the curtains and let me through."

She only struggled. He had not supposed there was so much strength in her slight body, but he supposed it was the strength of desperation. She would hurt herself in her struggles if that would give Tom time to flee.

"You beast," she cried out as she tried to wrench her hands free. "I hate you. How I hate you! I thought you were a man. That's why I tried to let you help me. You looked like a man but you are only a beast, a cowardly beast." She raised her voice shrilly. "Tom, run! Have you gone? Are you still there?"

For answer the curtains were thrust to one side. Tom came through them. He passed swiftly behind Katherine and came up alongside Sam. Sam saw that his young eyes were ablaze with passion. Without a word he shot his right fist against Sam's jaw. Sam staggered back against the wall. Tom followed up with a left toward the jaw. Sam countered it with an elbow and then he seized Tom around the waist and bore him across the room to a chair. He pinioned Tom's hands in his own.

"Sit still," he growled, "and I won't hurt you."

Tom struggled to rise but Sam held him fast. There was a rush of footsteps behind him. The girl's hand went to his holster. She was trying to tug out one of his big guns. He released his hold on Tom, clapped a hand on the gun butt, and stepped away from them.

"Miss Hale, Miss Hale," he pleaded. "Don't interfere. You don't know what you're doing."

The tempest in the girl's breast died. She sank into a chair and rested her face on her clasped hands. Sobs shook her. Sam went to her and knelt beside her. He did not touch her. He only murmured entreaties that she control herself. She shook her head and went on sobbing.

Sam felt a light hand on his shoulder. He looked up and encountered Tom's eyes. They were filled with pain. The young face had gone white and there were lines in it.

"You want me," Tom said. "I'll go with you all right. Get up. Let's go. I can't stand this."

Sam rose slowly. He was shaken as he had never in his life been shaken before. He had seen few women cry. He had seen no such exhibition of grief as this and he cared for this girl.

"Miss Hale," he whispered.

She raised her head and looked at him from tear-dimmed eyes. She had called him a beast, but he did not believe that now she thought him a beast. Her passion had died as swiftly as it had come. There was again only entreaty in her eyes.

"I'm only askin' you to trust me," Sam said. "Of course you don't know me. It's a good deal for me to ask, but I believe that the best thing this boy can do is to go back to jail. I can't stop now to tell you both why I think so. If you could only trust me."

"Do you think," Tom asked, "that there is a fighting chance for me to go free, to be cleared of the charge against me?"

"I think so," Sam said.

Katherine got to her feet and put both her hands on his arm. She studied his face now with suddenly gained calm.

"And do you mean that you are going to fight for him?" she asked.

"I'm goin' to fight for him," Sam said solemnly. "I'll do the best I can. If it should happen even to cost me my life, I'll give my life for your sake, ma'am."

His head was lifted. His eyes shone with a light which only one thing can kindle. His face was quiet, soft even, as he returned the girl's look.

"Take him," she said to him swiftly. "And—and if you can, forgive me for what I said."

Sam turned away. He could find no words to answer her. He nodded to Tom.

"Let's get out of here," he said thickly.

They went to the door. Before Sam could get it open, Katherine was at his side.

"You'll let me know what happens?" she asked. "You'll keep me informed?"

"Just as soon as there is anything to report, I'll come to see you," he promised.

Again she stood looking at him. Now her eyes were kind. Color crept into her cheeks. She put out her hand. Sam took it, held it loosely, dropped it. He opened the door and the boy and the man went out into the night.

Fifteen minutes later Tom was in a cell, no more to be released into the corridor even for exercise. Sam was on his way to the stable where he kept his horse. In fifteen minutes more the horse was carrying him to the lonely house. He was going to play the first of his hunches.

CHAPTER XIV

He passed the ragtown without having seen any one or having met any vehicle. The horse sped past the cluster of rude buildings and out on the road which would carry him to the house. He leaned a little forward, his eyes on the road. He did not want to pass any one; it would be best if he reached the house unobserved.

He gained the vicinity of the house safely. As before, he rode past it and halted a little way beyond it. Dismounting, he led his horse up to a roadside tree to tie him. Then he became aware that a car was drawn up to the edge of the road about fifty feet from where he stood. He went forward and examined the car. It was not a cab but a new cheap car. From its spotless condition Sam judged that it had taken its first trip.

He turned and made his way to the front of the house. He had an idea that whoever had driven the car out here was within the house. Whoever he was he could not be Dorsey or DeLana, because Sam supposed those two were still in the jail, though it was possible they had made bond.

He crept up to a front window and peered within. At first he could see nothing. Then a light appeared in the doorway leading to the rear room. The light came forward and Sam could discern that there was a man behind it. The figure was not sufficiently clear, however, to enable him to determine who the man was. He stepped back from the window and waited. The light was flashed about the room for a moment and was then turned off. His eyes now accustomed to the gloom, Sam saw the big bulk of a man move toward the front door.

"Reckon it's Styers," Sam told himself. "I got here just in time."

The front door was opened and Styers stepped out into the night. Sam had flattened himself against the side of the house, and Styers, though he glanced about briefly, apparently did not see him. Styers went out to the road and hurried along it. Sam heard him start the car.

"Fella, you an' me have got to have a little talk," Sam said to himself. "You can't go on a prowl and expect to ride away free an' easy like that."

He ran out into the road and saw the car coming toward him. Stepping to one side of the path of light from the car, he waited. He did not draw his gun. His contempt for the fat man would not permit him to do that. The car was near him, came abreast of him. It had not gathered speed and Sam took a step forward to be ready to leap on the running board.

But he did not leap. The pace of the car slackened. Styers turned it in at the roadside and stepped down. He walked rapidly up the path and Sam followed him. Sam stood beside the door while the other man went inside. Styers had come out empty handed the first time; Sam had a notion he might not do that on this second trip. In any event he was going to accost Styers when he did come out and he made no effort to conceal himself.

Presently the door was opened again. Styers stepped down from the sill. Sam stood out in the open, his right hand resting on his hip.

"Well, old timer," he said in a low voice, "what now?"

"Oh—ah—Mr. Rainey," said Styers. "I—I thought you——"

"You thought I was in jail," Sam grinned. "Well, I ain't. I'm right here. What's the occasion for your visit to-night?"

"Why, I just wanted to be alone," Styers answered. "I wanted to think."

"Where'd you get the new car?" Sam asked.

"I bought it several days ago," Styers answered. He went closer to Sam and appealed to him with a drawn look in his fishy eyes. "Look here, Mr. Rainey, you shouldn't hold enmity toward me. I haven't done anything to you. No matter what you suspect me of, I'm a business man. I'm not a crook as you seem to think I am."

"Neither is DeLana nor Dorsey, I suppose," Sam jeered.

"I—I was unfortunate in getting mixed up with those two men," Styers said. "I didn't really know what they were. But you know how it is with a traveling man. He likes to meet people when he's out on the road."

"That poker game wasn't crooked, was it?" Sam asked.

Styers stared at the ground. He seemed to be debating the kind of play he should make. He could hardly expect mercy from this man. Perhaps if he served Sam, the latter would be lenient toward him.

"Yes," he said slowly, "the poker game was crooked. But I didn't get the money. Those other two got it."

Sam reached out and laid a heavy hand on the man's shoulder. His long, sinewy fingers dug into the fat flesh on the shoulder.

"Quit your lyin' to me, Styers," Sam grated. "You knew that poker game was crooked. You led me into it. You got your share. You quit lyin' to me or I'll hurt you bad."

"Yes, yes, you're right. I was led astray by those men. But I'm leaving town to-night, Mr. Rainey. I bought that car to have it ready in an emergency. I must go on over my territory."

Sam was silent so long that Styers looked up at him. He shivered when he saw the look in Sam's eyes. It was the hard, cold look of a man in deadly earnest.

"Styers," Sam said in a voice edged with ice, "you haven't got any territory. That is, you ain't selling anything this trip, unless it is bogus goods to suckers.

You ain't got any more job than a rabbit."

"Why—what—" Styers stammered.

"When I set myself to match wits with you guys, I sent a little telegram to the comp'ny you used to work for," Sam said. "I asked them where I could get into touch with you. I got an answer that you wasn't with that comp'ny any more. You hadn't been for several months. What did they fire you for, Styers?"

"I—I don't understand that," Styers said. "I am regularly employed."

"Yeh, you are regularly employed but with tricks that Dorsey and DeLana plan. Would you like to see that telegram?"

"If you have such a telegram."

Sam drew the treasured slip of paper from his inside pocket and held it out to Styers. Styers took it and scanned it eagerly.

"Oh," he said, "that's the company that I formerly worked for. I'm with another company now."

"How many bills of goods have you sold since you been with this new company?"

"None. I haven't gone to work yet. I'm just looking over the territory."

"The truth ain't in you, Styers," Sam said. "But it don't make no difference. I know you're lyin'. A man don't waste his time after he has been fired by one comp'ny and has just hooked up with another. However, we'll let that pass. You can have a job in your own mind with forty comp'nies for all I care. What I want out of you this minute is what you are doing out here. And before you answer I'll just tip you off to somethin'. You know what this means, don't you?"

He flipped open his coat and displayed his badge.

"A deputy," Styers breathed.

"You betcha," Sam grinned. "I got the law behind me now, old timer, and you better let a little respect for the law seep into your system. Now, what brought you out here to-night?"

Again Styers considered, his eyes on the ground. He had decided that day that he was getting into deep water and had determined to swim out while he could.

"I've told you the truth about that, Mr. Rainey," he declared. "I just wanted to be alone to think things out."

"Have you seen DeLana and Dorsey?"

"Why, yes. They sent for me from the jail."

"And they told you to hustle around and get money for a cash bond, so you could all blow," Sam said. "Ain't that right?"

"No, Mr. Rainey, that isn't right. They merely told me to keep my mouth shut."

"Then they have money to make bond?" Sam asked.

"They have money. They will be free in the morning. Then this place won't be safe for you and me, Mr. Rainey."

"We're going to stick around just the same," Sam declared. "In the meantime we'll go into the house and have a look around."

"What do you expect to find in the house?" Styers asked.

"I'll tell you better after we look around. March in."

Styers moved to the door and opened it and stepped back. Sam grinned.

"I wouldn't let you get behind me on no account, Styers," he said. "Go right along."

Styers stepped in beyond the door.

"Let's have your flash-light, fella," Sam directed, and Styers handed it over.

"Got a gun?" Sam asked.

"I have not."

Sam patted his pockets but found no weapon.

"You're one of these here safety first guys, ain't you?" Sam sneered. "You don't run no risk of being taken up on a minor charge. If you had had a gun I could have locked you up."

"You'll never lock me up," Styers asserted, "and you'll pay for what you are doing now."

"Huh, you got a nasty temper hid away, ain't you?" Sam derided him. "Well, don't you go to lettin' it get the best of you. I'll maul you if you do."

"Well, what is it you want?" Styers demanded.

"There's a box upstairs that I want to have a look into," Sam answered. "First you mount a chair and light the lamp. A little light ain't goin' to do us no harm."

Styers obeyed. The yellow light flowed through the room. Styers stood beneath it and Sam saw that his face

was pasty gray. His lips were unsteady and there was a little tremor of the head.

"Your nerves are goin' back on you, Styers," Sam said. "That is a most pleasant sight to me. When a man's nerves begin to wiggle he ain't no account nohow."

"I'm waiting for you," Styers rasped.

"Just move the table under the trap door," Sam directed.

When Styers had obeyed, he mounted the table and pushed back the door.

"Don't you go to makin' no break, Styers," he cautioned. "I'll be up here in a jerk an' I'll have a gun on you before you can take three steps."

He thrust up his arms and drew himself through the opening. Lying flat, he pointed a gun at the man below.

"Come on up, buddy," he said.

Styers made the attempt but he was trembling so through all his body that Sam had to help him. When he stood up he was gasping for breath. The wheeze of his exhalations was loud in the attic.

"Man," Sam said, "this worry ain't doin' you no good. Looks to me like you got a bum heart."

"My heart is none too good," Styers complained, "and what you're doing to me isn't helping it any."

"Well, train your light on the box," Sam said.

When Styers turned on the flash, after Sam had handed it back to him, Sam moved over to the box. Styers followed him as if to keep the light where Sam wanted it. Sam stood looking at the box for a minute. The top of it was loosely nailed on and Sam knelt and pulled at it. It came away with a rasping sound of drawn nails. Sam peered inside. The box was empty.

Sam looked up at Styers, who was now just behind him. Styers stared down at the box, feigning surprise.

"Quit your kiddin'," Sam said. "You've been at this box. You took something out of it when you were here before. What did you do with it?"

"I took nothing," Styers declared.

Sam looked down at the box, his brows knitted. He was conscious that the light was lifted from the box. He raised his head. He tried to dodge the end of the big flashlight as it descended toward his temple but he was not quick enough. The metal on the end of the big tube caught him just above the right eye.

"You dog," he whispered.

He tried to get to his feet but had not sufficient strength. He raised himself six inches but that brought acute dizziness. For an instant he could not see. In that instant he felt Styers draw one of his guns from its holster. The gun crashed down on the back of his head. He plunged forward over the box, dead to the world for the time being.

Styers stood looking down at him for an instant and then he turned and ran to the trap door and let himself down through it. In the room below he put out the oil lamp and snatched up a black bag which he had hidden behind the door and which had escaped Sam's notice because the door had been left open. With the bag in his hand Styers ran out to the car, threw the bag on the seat, climbed in beside it, and sped away through the night.

CHAPTER XV.

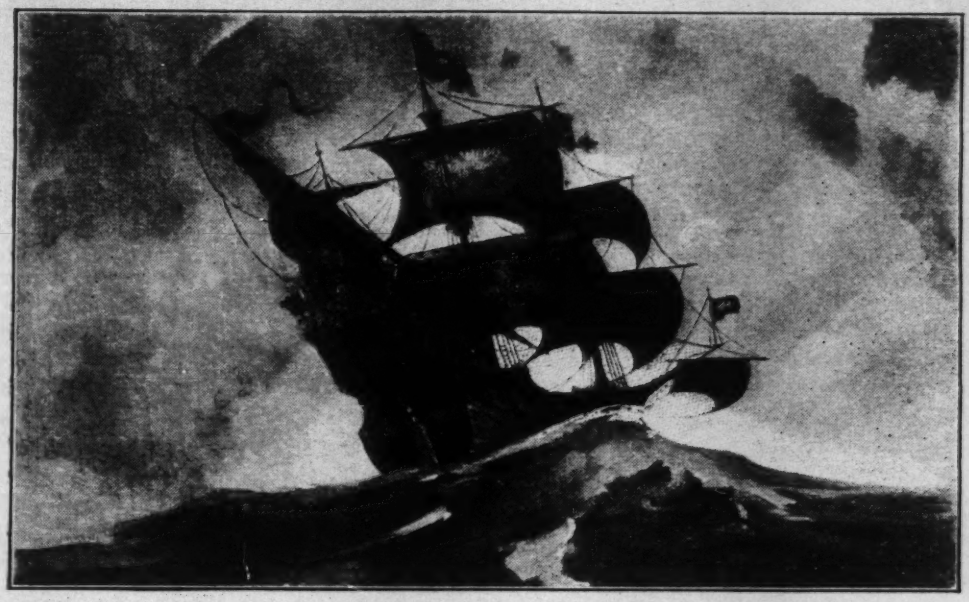
Health in large measure was Sam Rainey's and on this occasion luck had joined hands with health. He was lucky in that the blow from the gun butt had not fractured his skull. His strength brought him back to consciousness more quickly than a weaker man would have revived.

It was not a clear consciousness at first. He came to with closed eyes and he still had a sensation of falling into darkness. The darkness lifted a little. A noise roused him still further. The noise, he discovered, was the groans which were issuing from his lips. He locked his lips when he realized that and tried to raise himself from the box. He had to make half a dozen attempts before he got to a sitting position on the floor. Eyes closed, he sat there, summoning his wits and his strength. At last he opened his eyes again and the room had ceased to whirl. There was a damp warmth on his cheek and on the back of his head. The hand he put up came away stained red. Styers' blow had raised a huge lump and had cracked the scalp.

Getting to his feet, he felt for his guns. One was gone, Styers having retained it, he supposed. The other was still in its holster.

"I'll shoot you on sight, fella," Sam ground out.

All his strength was required to en-



The Spirit of Pioneering

Impatience with present facilities, a restless searching for perfect things—these have driven men to discovery and invention. They possessed the early voyagers who turned their backs on the security of home to test opportunity in an unknown land. They explain the march westward that resulted in this settled, united country. And they have inspired the activities of the Bell System since the invention of the telephone.

The history of the Bell System records impatience with anything less than the best known way of doing a job. It records a steady and continuous search to find an even better way. In every department of telephone activity improvement has been the goal—new methods of construction and operation, refinement in equipment, discoveries in science that might aid in advancing the telephone art. Always the road has been kept open for an unhampered and economic development of the telephone.

Increased capacity for service has been the result. Instead of rudimentary telephones connecting two rooms in 1876, to-day finds 15,000,000 telephones serving a whole people. Instead of speech through a partition, there is speech across a continent. Instead of a few subscribers who regarded the telephone as an uncertain toy, a nation recognizes it as a vital force in the business of living.

Thus has the Bell System set its own high standards of service. By to-day's striving it is still seeking to make possible the greater service of to-morrow.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

BELL SYSTEM

One Policy, One System, Universal Service

THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

(*Continued from page 144*)

able him to lower himself through the door. Downstairs he had to sit a while before he could proceed further. His head ached now with a dull throb.

At length he was able to stagger out into the night and find his horse. The animal had moved up among the trees and Sam supposed that was why Styers had not seen it. Doubtless if he had seen it, he would have put a bullet into it.

Sam untied the horse and led him up the road. In front of the house he stopped. He could plainly see the marks which the wheels of Styers' automobile had made. There were four fresh tracks, two made when Styers had come out to the house and two when he had returned toward the city. To make sure he had not gone in the other direction, Sam went to where the car had been first parked. No tracks lay beyond this spot.

Sam took off his hat and rubbed his newly acquired lump in some perplexity. He did not understand this move on Styer's part. Styers knew now that Sam was a deputy. It seemed quite unlikely that he would head toward the city after his attack. Sam remembered then that Styers knew the roads hereabouts. Doubtless he had traversed them often in the past when he was actually a traveling salesman. It might be that the road beyond here was not adapted to automobile traffic. In that case Styers would turn off on the first crossroad.

Sam mounted and rode away down the road, urging his horse to top speed. He sat loosely in the saddle, slumped down, for the ache in his head was growing almost insufferable. He paid no attention to the car's tracks. Styers could only go on or turn off at the first intersecting road. He could not come back without meeting Sam. That first intersecting road ran through the ragtown. Styers might take it or go on to the next road. That would depend upon whether he decided to take a chance for the sake of haste.

He had taken that chance, Sam discovered, when he came to the first road. Dismounting, he found that the car had been turned abruptly out of the main road. There was a wider track where it had skidded a little on its hind wheels, Sam turned his horse into the road.

Lights were shining dully through the windows of a one-story shack with a false front. Sam slid from his horse in front of this place and entered. Five men were playing cards at a table in the rear and a sixth man was leaning on the bar over which soft drinks were supposed to be served. The man lifted his eyes and stared as Sam approached the bar.

"Seen a car go by here lately?" Sam demanded.

The man grinned evilly, showing two rows of broken yellow teeth. His small eyes hardened.

"Stranger, this is the poorest place in the world to come to when you want to find out anything," he said. "What's happened to you—had a ruckus?"

"And that's my business," Sam retorted. "Has a car passed this way lately?"

"You won't find out from me."

"Won't I?"

The bartender's hands had been beneath the bar. Sam saw the right arm straighten out. Then it was bent slowly. Sam knew that a gun would come up above the bar in another instant. He hooked his gun from its holster and lifted it so that it was pointed at the bartender's head.

"Stick your hands on the bar, fella," Sam ordered. "And be sure they're empty. And you fellas over there, just keep your seats and don't make no hostile move. I'm watchin' you out of the corner of my eye."

He flipped back his coat and the bartender caught the gleam of his star. He put his empty hands in front of him on the bar.

"Deputy, eh?" he sneered. "I thought so. Been trying to get fresh with some real man an' he beat you up."

"I'm a deputy," Sam agreed. "You betcha! An' the sheriff has assigned me to this man's town. I'll be droppin' over here to see you, fella, as soon as I finish a little job of work I have on hand. Well?"

"A car passed here about thirty minutes ago," the bartender said.

"Going which way?"

"Toward the west."

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THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

(*Continued from page 146*)

"You got a phone?"

"No."

"Where's the nearest town?"

"If you are a deputy, you know the city is the nearest."

"I said town."

"Oh. Well, there's a town north of here about five miles. You go up to the next road an' that is three quarters of a mile from here."

"Railroad run through that town?"

"Yes."

"Know anything about trains?"

"There's a train at midnight."

Sam glanced at a battered clock on the wall. It marked fifteen minutes to midnight. Five miles in fifteen minutes.

"That's all," Sam said. "Keep your hands on the bar while I back out. I'll take a look through the window to see if you stir. If you do in the next five minutes, I'll plug you. Get me?"

The bartender said nothing. Sam backed to the door. Turning quickly, he passed through it and ran to the window. Pressing his face to the pane, he saw that the bartender had not moved. His eyes were on the clock. Sam ran to his horse, mounted, and fled down the road in the dark. There was no sound behind him.

Where the roads intersected again he dismounted and examined the tracks. They turned toward the north. Again there was the wider track where the car had skidded. Sam re-mounted and struck the horse with his hat. It leaped away and straightened out for a run.

At two crossroads he had to dismount to discover that the car had gone straight on. At the last of these roads paving began and Sam could no longer follow the car. However, he soon found that he was in the city limits. He believed that Styers would either stop at the station or go on through town.

He came to the railroad track and down them a hundred feet he saw the station lights. He knew that now he would have to proceed with the utmost caution, for Styers was around and his attack on Sam showed that he was desperate. The desperation of a weak man, Sam was aware, was more dangerous than that of a strong man. If Sam came upon Styers, unawares, Styers would be panic-stricken and would doubtless shoot without warning. He dismounted and led his horse up to the rear of the station and hitched him there. Then he proceeded noiselessly to the front of the building. As he had expected he found a board there and the times of a number of trains were chalked up on it. Sam ran his eye down the numbers. He found that a westbound train, due at midnight, was forty minutes late. A glance at his silver watch showed that he had thirty minutes.

Stepping in front of the window, he looked inside. A telegraph operator sat in front of a table with his feet on it and his hat over his eyes. From the rise and fall of his chest Sam judged that he was asleep.

Sam went through the door and up to the window. The operator slept on.

"Hey, fella," Sam called.

The operator stirred lazily, took down his feet, lifted his hat.

"Howdy, stranger," he said. "Want a ticket for Forty-One? Forty minutes late."

"I don't want a ticket," Sam answered. "I want a little information."

"This is an information bureau."

"Has any one been in here in the last little while?"

"Man bought a ticket to El Paso a while ago."

"What for lookin' man?"

The operator gave a fairly good description of Styers.

"Did he have a car?" Sam asked.

"I didn't see or hear a car. I was pounding my ear like when you come up."

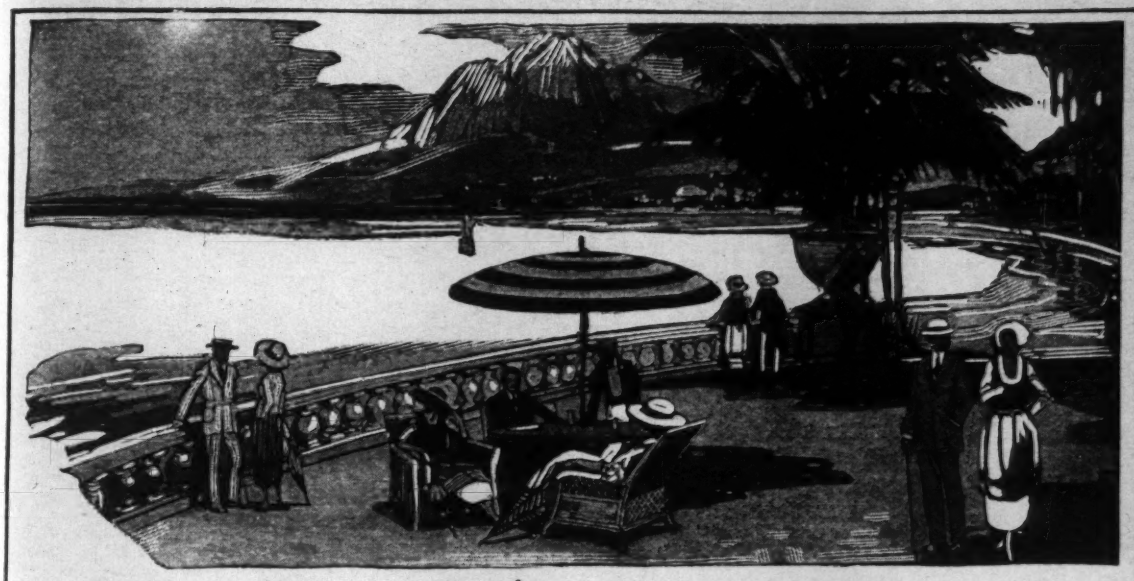
Sam stood looking at the young fellow for a few minutes. A little co-operation, he decided, would do no harm. Once more he flipped back his coat. The operator looked at the badge.

"Uh huh," he said. "You're one of Granger's new men, are you?"

"Granger's? No, Battles'."

"Battles'? Gosh, man, you are in the wrong pew. Battles does business over in the next county. If you've come from Battles' bailiwick you've crossed the county line about a mile back here. Your badge ain't no good nohow."

"I aim to get the guy that bought the



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THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

(*Continued from page 148*)

ticket," Sam said. "All I ask of you is that you stay nootral. If that guy comes here askin' questions you don't know nothin'. See?"

He grinned at the operator and waited. An answering grin came to the operator's lips.

"By the looks of the blood on you I'd say you was the under dog," he said. "I'm always for the under dog. I tipped you off on this guy but if he comes inquirin' I won't know nothin'. That will even up for the wallop he seems to have give you."

"I don't generally ask no odds, but I'll take that much this trip," Sam said. "About twenty-five minutes before that train is due, huh?"

"Yep."

"Any garages in this town?"

"One. A block up the main street over there. Open all night."

"I'll be seeing you," Sam said.

He went back to the main street and walked rapidly till he came to the garage. He was across the street from it and he stood looking into its interior for a moment. He could see only one man in it, working on a car under a dropped light.

As Sam entered the man looked up. Sam did not look at him. His attention was caught by the car. If it was not the car in which Styers had been riding it was that car's twin brother.

"Where'd you get the car?" Sam asked.

"Where'd I get the car?" the man repeated. "Where would you expect me to get it? Bought it of course."

"Who from?"

"Had it shipped from the factory o' course."

Sam looked into the man's eyes. The man stood the steady stare for a moment and then his eyes shifted away. He bent to continue his polishing of the machine.

"Look up, brother," Sam said softly.

"Brother" looked up and he, too, was introduced to that handy star. His lips dropped open, he gulped. He was a fox with the traits of a fox. He seemed to decide that foxiness was no good just now.

"Oh, I didn't know you was one of

THE PERMANENT DEPUTY

(*Continued from page 150*)

Granger's new men, stranger," he said and he essayed a healthy smile. "O' course I bought this car. I bought it just a little bit ago. A guy drove it in and took a hundred and fifty for it. I'd met that guy before. He used to sell goods round here. Styers is his name. I thought he was all right. Is it a stolen car? If it is, I'll hike to the station and stop that guy before he blows."

"I think the car belongs to you," Sam said. "You can keep it as far as I'm concerned."

He went out into the street and stood in the shadow of the building next door to the station. He knew his next play was to get back to the station without being seen. He had no idea of course where Styers was. He might be lurking anywhere along the street and he might shadow Sam and stop him just before the train pulled in.

Sam looked to his left. He saw that an alley led away from the street. Edging over to it, he stepped into it. It was dark its whole length, like a tunnel till it ran to an opening in the street beyond. There a street light relieved the gloom.

Sam knew that Styers might very easily be hiding in this alley. It would be a natural shelter for him to seek. He could hide here till he heard the train whistle afar. Then he could dash for the station and clamber on board the train just as it was pulling out. But Sam felt he had to take the chance. Styers might be here or he might be anywhere else. The danger was about as great in one place as in another.

His gun in his hand, he made his cautious way along the alley. He encountered no one. When the train was within five minutes of being due he left the alley's mouth and hurried to the station. He went around behind it and came up at the end nearest the street. A truck stood on the platform and this sheltered him, so that any one coming up on the platform would not see him. Two minutes passed. Then there was the whistle of the train. Sam rose and edged to the corner of the building.

(*To be concluded*)

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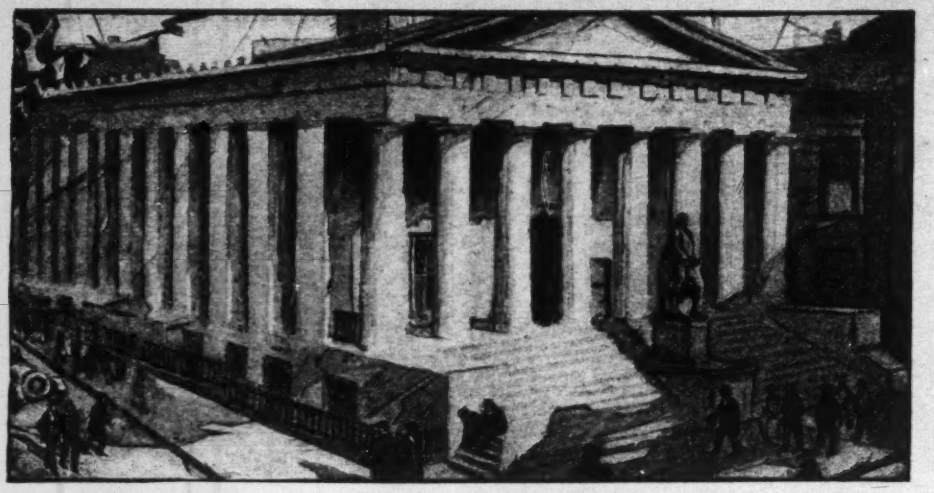

PRICES AND DEMAND

By PAUL TOMLINSON

THERE is an old saying current among fishermen that in selecting bait it is not the fisherman's taste which counts, but the fish's. The hook may be baited with some morsel which the angler thinks is most delectable, but if the fish do not like it, they are not going to bite. The same reasoning applies to business. The manufacturer must suit his product to the public taste if he expects to make sales. It is true that by advertising and clever sales methods a certain amount of demand for almost any product can be created, but in the final analysis it is the consumer who creates business, not the producer.

The consumer is the man who determines the demand for a thing, whether the thing be steel or wheat or copper or perfume or cotton or transportation or any of the various necessities or luxuries of life. We, as a people, are liable to lay our greatest emphasis upon production, to boast of our ability to produce in quantity, to increase production by standardization of products, by labor saving machinery and methods of economy in handling. All of which is important, but we must consider the taste of the consumer, and if we produce more than we are able to sell, what happens?

Wheat furnishes an example of what happens when there is overproduction. Our farms grew and harvested more wheat last year than the American market could absorb; we found ourselves unable to sell it abroad, and as the result of an oversupply competition increased among the sellers and prices went down. The farmers found themselves in financial difficulties because their wheat could not be marketed for as much as it cost them to raise it. The cry of overproduction was raised continually during the past winter and the wheat farmers were urged to reduce their acreage. The same sort of thing happened in many businesses, but farming has found numerous champions and the plight of the farmers has been called most prominently to the public's attention; this has been especially true in the last few years.

It is no secret that the industrial machinery of this country is capable of producing more than domestic consumption can absorb. We are finding it more difficult to unlock the doors of foreign markets than used to be the case, and if prices are not going to fall it is well for us to fit our production to the demand. During 1923 there were commercial failures, and many of them were due to the fact that the concerns involved were loaded up with supplies of goods which they could not sell. Their money was tied up in inventories and could not be released; when the

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PRICES AND DEMAND

(*Continued from page* 154)

need for ready cash arose it was not to be satisfied.

Most producers realize the unwisdom of overstocking their retail sellers. If a man running a retail store can, in the ordinary course of business, sell $1,500 worth of goods in six months and the wholesaler persuades him to buy $2,500 worth the merchant's business will have to expand about 65 per cent or he must dispose of his surplus stock at a loss. If he can stand the loss, he will weather the storm, and benefiting by his experience, buy more conservatively next time. If he cannot stand the loss he fails and very likely goes out of business; there is not only his failure to consider, but the manufacturer has one less customer. The producer and the consumer are like the camel and the load of straw; the camel can carry just so much, and if he is overloaded he not only fails to perform what is expected of him, but his back is broken and he is of no value whatsoever.

At the time this is written people are saying a great deal about the "quietness" of business. The steel mills are operating at less than seventy-five per cent of capacity, the cotton mills are running a little better than fifty per cent; and the morning paper announces that one big railroad, rather than lay off any of its employees, has reduced every man's working week to five days. So it goes. The automobile companies have not encountered the demand for cars they had anticipated and are curtailing their output. What is the explanation of this situation?

Many people say that business is always bad before a presidential election, that the passage of the bonus bill has caused incalculable harm to business, that wages are so high no one can afford to pay the price, and that taxes and governmental waste have killed initiative.

Undoubtedly there is truth in all of these statements, but is there just cause for pessimism? Well, we heard two men talking the situation over and their remarks may be of interest. One of them was a young man, a member of the New York Stock Exchange, and the other a man who had been a member for many years but who had retired from active business some time ago. It was at the time that the bonus bill had just been passed by the Senate over the President's veto.

"That means rotten business for a long time to come," said the young man, utterly discouraged. "If the government is going to take all the money people make, who is going to buy stocks and bonds? What's the use in being thrifty if you have to pay out all you save in taxes?"

"I know," said the older man, "but listen to me. I quite agree that the bonus bill is a wicked piece of legislation and that it puts unwarranted hardships on business. At the same time I can remember lots of occasions when I was on the exchange when things happened which seemed equally vicious, and I felt just as discouraged and blue as you do now. But the country survived them all, so far as I can see; there is still some business being done and, you know, some people are even making a little money."

"But," objected the young man, "think how much better off every one would be if we didn't have this bonus bill."

"Of course," said his friend. "The high cost of everything as a result of it will make it the most expensive insurance you ever saw, and the veterans themselves are going to pay a large part of the premiums, whether they know it or not. My point is, though, that the country will survive in spite of it, and if business is bad now it may be all the better on that account later."

"How?"

"If the basic industries are curtailing production, that means stocks of goods are going to get low. As time goes on they will get lower. Eventually they will have to be replenished and then business will revive, the mills will start up again and there will be business activity all along the line. That certainly ought to mean better times, shouldn't it?"

"If it comes true, it does," said the young man.

"It has always happened that way be-

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fore," said his friend, "and I'm a great believer in precedent."

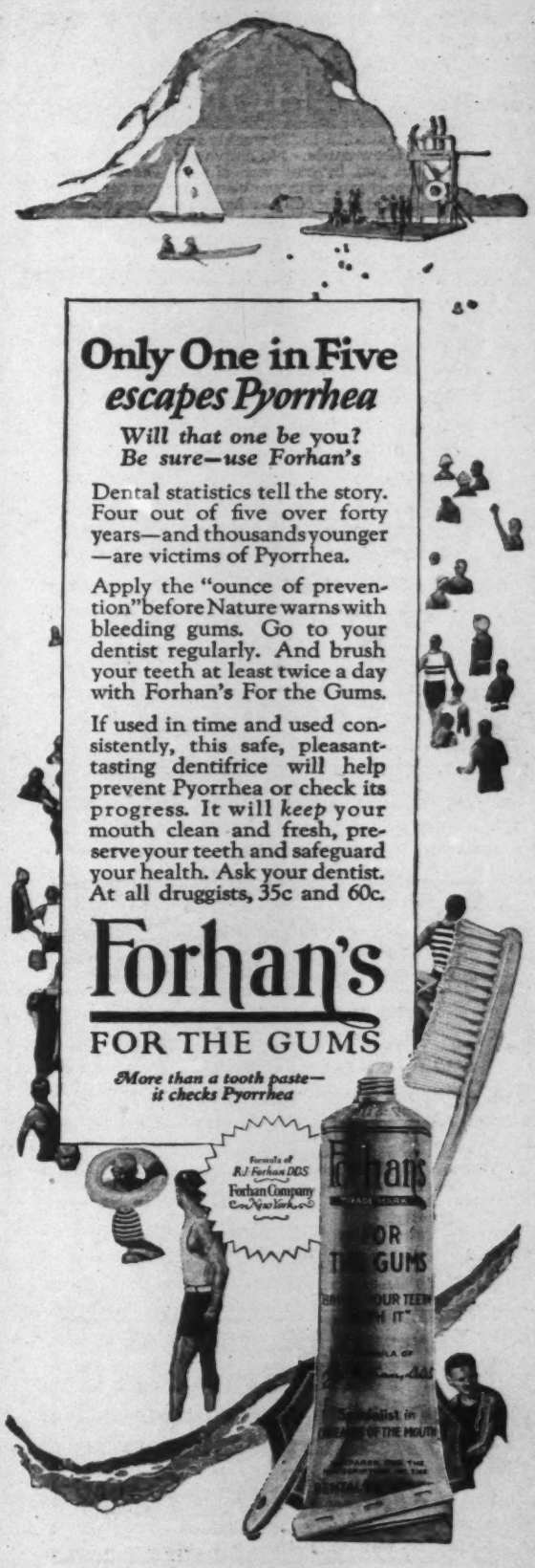
This conversation is reported, because it shows that opinions can always differ and that there are two points of view on every situation. The older of these two men adopts the attitude of the two men who met on the street one rainy day.

"Rotten day, isn't it?" said one.

"Yes," said the other, "but the very fact that it's raining to-day increases the chances of clear weather to-morrow."

He may have been over-optimistic, but it is a fact that when business is slack, when people are discouraged and when prices are low, there are often better times ahead and frequently bargains are to be had that are not available when everything is booming and every one is full of confidence. And this applies to investments as forcibly as to anything else. All during the spring the demand for securities has been slack and the daily total of sales has been considerably lower than was the case a year ago. The buyers of stocks and bonds are the consumers in the securities markets, the ones who create investment business, just as the purchasers of automobiles are the ones who create business for the motor car industry. With a light demand, a demand not equal to the supply, prices decline, and certainly no one will maintain that stock and bond prices have been high during the past months. Investors are lacking in confidence, waiting apparently for something to happen, although they are not quite sure what that something is.

A high grade investment, it should be remembered, is not exactly comparable to most commodities, however. A man buys wheat and he must sell it again within a certain time or it will deteriorate; an automobile begins to deteriorate from the moment it is put in use; railroad equipment wears out; steel needs care and attention to prevent corrosion; but stocks and bonds, properly chosen, do not deteriorate. Securities are affected by business conditions, by political considerations and by the price of money, but the best investments maintain their intrinsic worth, even though they may fluctuate in price in sympathy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with the general situation. The very fact that they do fluctuate makes it possible for the man with available money to take advantage of the low prices which periodically present themselves. The lower the price he pays the higher the return on his investment, and if the security he selects is of the right sort, the fact that it has declined in price is not so much a sign of danger as an indication that a bargain is presenting itself. We know of a bond, now being bought and sold at a price twenty points lower than it sold for a few years ago, and yet the security back of it is better than it ever was, and the issuing corporation's earnings have been running considerably in excess of what they were when the higher price was in effect.

All of this is written in an effort to set forth the idea that price is a matter of demand and supply, and this applies to investments as truly as it does to any other commodity. There is this difference between investments and the other commodities, however, that investments may be obtained at low prices and put away without danger of depreciation from the ravages of time, while most other things bought at a low price must be used soon or they will become valueless. An investment bargain, therefore, is a real bargain and it remains a bargain just as long as the purchaser chooses to keep it. This, it seems to us, is a point worth emphasizing, and is a strong argument in favor of saving money so that advantage may be taken of real opportunities when they do come along.

Low prices make things difficult for the producer and they are not always of benefit to the consumer. The demand of the consumer fixes prices, so that if prices are low that means the consumer does not want to buy. He does not want to buy because he has no use for the thing offered for sale, which means probably that his own business is slack. We have never heard of any one who had no use for good securities, however, and if they happen to be low in price they are just that much more useful and present an opportunity not to be missed.

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

ANSWERED BY JAMES O. PARSONS

This department of financial advice freely offers its services to all readers. Send your query to the Financial Editor of McCLURE'S MAGAZINE, 80 Lafayette Street, New York City, and you will receive a prompt reply. Correspondence will be held confidential, but investment questions of general interest will be published anonymously.

I HOLD 108 shares of Standard Oil Company of California and 16 shares of Ohio Oil purchased several years ago. These securities at present market prices show a substantial increase in value over the purchase price, but are paying dividends considerably less than could be obtained if their market value were invested in bonds paying 6 per cent. I am wondering whether the financial position of these companies and the prospects for the future in the oil industry are such as to justify holding the stocks for an advance in value. I am of the opinion that a reinvestment in diversified bonds would be advisable.

A. In the long run it will probably prove advantageous to you to take your profits in these securities and reinvest the proceeds of the sale in sound bonds. The Standard Oil Company of California and the Ohio Oil Company are both strong corporations, ranking high in the industry, but at best their stocks can only be given a speculative investment rating. Such securities fluctuate widely at times in accordance with the shifting trend of the industry. We feel, therefore, that you will be wise in considering the transfer of your funds into bonds yielding from 6 to 6½ per cent.

Q. I have a client who owns some stock in the Buffalo General Electric Company, which he obtained about two years ago at $105 per share. It is quoted around $135 a share now, having made quite an advance recently. He is unable to learn of any particular reason for this advance, and I would be pleased to have you give me any information you can in regard to the stock and the reason for such an advance in the price; also, if you will, give me your opinion as to whether or not he should hold for a further advance.

A. The Buffalo General Electric Company, the records of its past operating performance show, has enjoyed a steady and consistent growth in earnings for the past ten years. The company has paid liberal dividends on its stock, the rate being advanced in 1919 to eight per cent. In 1922 the company earned its fixed charges more than 3¼ times. Judging from the figures in hand, the company, which does the entire electric lighting and power business in Buffalo and also serves many adjoining towns, controlling the Niagara Electric Service Corporation, is in a strong financial position and the advance in the stock has no doubt been the market's reflection of this condition. We cannot undertake to pass an opinion upon whether or not your client should sell and take his profits.

Q. For a woman having a small amount of money to invest do you think the following list of bonds is safe? French 8s of 1945, French 7½s of 1941; Austrian 7s of 1943; U. S. Rubber 7½s of 1930; Goodyear Tire & Rubber 8s of 1931; and Kelly-Springfield sinking fund 8s of 1931.

A. In making up this list you have apparently over-emphasized yield. We do not believe these bonds are of a type suited to your purpose. All of them contain too much of an element of risk and it would be better in your case to reduce that to a minimum in selecting your investments. Our opinion is that you should sacrifice income in favor of safety. Proceeding on this theory, which is a sound one, it would be better to consider bonds which are entitled to a higher investment rating, such for example as Southwestern Bell Telephone 5s of 1954, Chicago & Northwestern RR 6½s of 1936, U. S. Steel sinking fund 5s, and Anaconda Copper 6s due 1953.

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